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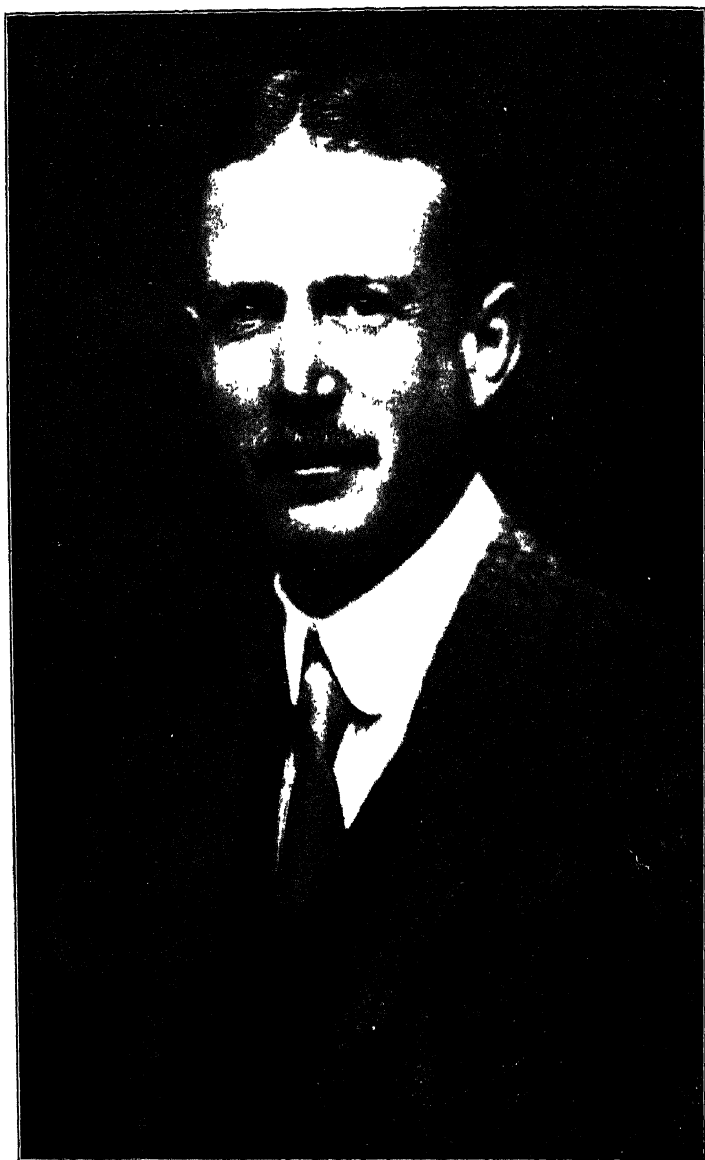


FRANK MAXWELL









*G. C. Beresford.*]

[*Frontispiece.*

FRANK MAXWELL.

1906.

# FRANK MAXWELL

BRIG.-GENERAL, V.C., C.S.I., D.S.O.

A MEMOIR AND SOME LETTERS

EDITED BY  
HIS WIFE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON  
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

1921

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## PREFACE

MANY of my husband's friends have asked me to publish his letters. I have hesitated to do so from two motives—the greater being that they were private letters written to his mother and to me by one whose last desire would have been to seek publicity in any form; the lesser reason, that, though they would be of interest to his friends, who could see evidences of his character in every page, they might not interest those who did not know him.

Many passages I have felt I could not share with any one; but again I feel that without them the letters would be incomplete, and no stranger could even guess at one of the most beautiful attributes in his character. And if this book is to be the pleasure I hope it may be to you (especially to boys and young men whose interests he had always so much at heart), I must put aside my first thoughts and ask you to share with me in the knowledge of the wonderful love that he was capable of giving.

His unabating thoughtfulness comes out so strongly in the long, carefully-written letters to his mother when on service on the Indian frontier and in South Africa, when he must often have been

very weary ; but he would not have disappointed her of her letter each mail, and no letter seems to have been hurriedly written. Throughout his life he "made" time for others.

Some excisions have been necessary—the volume of letters is so great ; but otherwise the letters are published exactly as they were written—in camp, in dug-out, or, as in the Trônes Wood letter, in a ditch under fire—for under no circumstances would he have disappointed me of my daily letter.

I have had the joy of seeing many who served under him in France ; and from one and all I hear stories of his thought for them and their love for him.

I wish the letters to tell their own story with as few additions as possible ; but I feel they are incomplete without one or two quotations.

The following was told to me by Colonel Smyth, one of his battalion commanders. The incident alluded to was in the 3rd battle of Ypres, September 20th, the day previous to his death. On being told of his death by an officer, a sergeant asked him whether he remembered the General coming into the trench out of the mist at the first objective during the attack on the Thursday morning, for, he added, it seemed like a presence almost superhuman in its influence and power of giving a feeling of safety. "And that," said Colonel Smyth, "is what we all felt—if he was with us nothing could happen to us."

Writing to me in December, 1917, his orderly showed me another aspect of the bond that existed between my husband and those with whom he

served. "I was up round the trenches to-day, and coming back I came across country. I thought General Maxwell was with me and that he said something to make me laugh; and I can safely say, madam, that I did laugh. I could see him so plain, and it put a new feeling in me; it was so lovely."

Sir Philip Gibbs<sup>1</sup> made no false estimate in thus alluding to him after the taking of Thiépval on September 26, 1916: "Men would follow such a man into furnace fires—and did."

That his brigade, officers, non-commissioned officers, and men should have placed a beautiful memorial in the shape of a Victoria Cross to him in St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, speaks for itself.

I always think that the greatest achievement of his life was at the taking of Trônes Wood on July 14, 1916, and I feel that he realised that he had been called upon to "give out" more during those three days than at any other time of his life. We never talked of the war when he was on leave; but on hearing he had been awarded a bar to his D.S.O. for his share in the taking of Thiépval, he said to me: "I wish they had called it Trônes."

It is a great regret to me that none of his early letters from India have been preserved; they would have given an insight into the joyous side of his character, for he was always full of fun. Love of sport and games (pig-sticking and polo) played a great part in his life.

My grateful thanks are given to several of his

<sup>1</sup> "The Battles of the Somme," chap. xxxvii, p. 319.



friends for their help in compiling the book, and for the short sketch of his life that has been prefixed to the letters, and the paragraphs and footnotes inserted in the body of the book to explain gaps and allusions in the correspondence.

CHARLOTTE MAXWELL.

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# FRANK MAXWELL

## CHAPTER I

### A MEMOIR

"This was the happy Warrior ; this was he  
That every man in arms should wish to be."

FRANCIS AYLMER MAXWELL was born at Guildford in 1871, and was a descendant through both his parents of an ancient fighting stock. His father was a Maxwell of Dargavel, County Renfrew, and his mother a Lockhart of Milton Lockhart, County Lanark.

He was generally called Frank Maxwell, though to some of his friends he was known as "The Brat," a nickname given to him by Lord Kitchener.

The family consisted of four daughters and seven sons, Frank being the third. The three elder sons—William, Lawrence, and Frank—and the youngest, Eustace, all went into the Indian Cavalry, and the remaining three—David, Pat, and Walter—though civilians by profession, served both in South Africa and in the European War. Of the seven brothers, six were on active service at the same time in South Africa, the eldest, William,

being detained in India by a Staff appointment. He died in 1914, just before the European War, while commanding his regiment, the 10th Lancers, in Baluchistan. Lawrence commanded a cavalry brigade in France practically throughout the War. Frank and Eustace were both killed fighting in France, and Pat died in 1915 of pneumonia, contracted on active service. David served in Gallipoli and France, where he was very severely wounded, and Walter in France. Frank was much attached to his brothers, and there are constant allusions to them in his letters; moreover, their record of service as a family is sufficiently remarkable to justify this digression.

In appearance, Frank was essentially a representative of the Anglo-Saxon race, with his clear skin, keen eyes, and fair hair; of medium height, well set-up, and with a carriage and poise of head distinctly his own. Strength, sympathy, and humour were strongly marked in his features—while he seemed to radiate vitality and charm. The fresh candour of his nature, the gaiety of spirit, and his vigour were fascinating. His mind and heart were given to others and his outlook on life was large, with a complete absence of self-seeking. He was generous to a fault in appreciation of the work of others—singularly sensitive to human suffering and wrong-doing, with an intense love of animals.

Frank did not suffer fools gladly, and he had difficulty in restraining himself when persons and things did not come up to expectation; but his sense of justice made him accessible to any reasonable appeal, especially from those under him.

Anything that might be regarded as unbecoming the conduct of a gentleman was detestable in his eyes.

He always declared that he owed everything that was good in him to his mother's influence and example, and indeed the foundation of his remarkable career was set in a pure and simple home. Religion always played a great part in his life, and the Bible was to Frank the most valuable thing that this earth affords.

From the United Service College at Westward Ho! he went to the Royal Military College, from which he passed out with honours.

Like the majority of officers destined for the Indian Army, Frank was not blessed with the riches of this life, and had to rely on his own resources to make his way in the world.

In 1891 he joined the Royal Sussex Regiment in India, and after a year's service with this battalion was appointed to the 24th Punjab Infantry.

In his new surroundings Frank quickly found himself; the opportunities came, were as promptly seized and turned to good account.

His first experience of active service was in the Tochi Valley, in 1895, and this was shortly followed by the Chitral Relief Expedition. During this latter campaign Frank was attached to the Guides Infantry, and displayed conspicuous gallantry in bringing back under a heavy fire his colonel, who had been desperately wounded.

His behaviour in this action was specially brought to the notice of the Commander-in-Chief in India, and he was recommended for the Victoria



Cross. Frank's reputation had now been made, and in 1896 Col. George Richardson, Commandant of the 18th Bengal Lancers, who was as good a judge of a youngster as of a horse, soon secured Frank Maxwell for the 18th Lancers, on the books of which he remained for the rest of his service, being selected as Commandant a few months before he was killed ; but alas ! he never took up the appointment. About this time two other subalterns also joined the 18th Lancers—Wigram and Fitzgerald—and between this trio a firm and lasting friendship sprung up.

It is a curious coincidence that these three brother officers later held important posts of a semi-civil nature. Maxwell went to Lord Kitchener, and then to Lord Hardinge, Viceroy of India ; Wigram to Lord Curzon, and afterwards to King George ; while Fitzgerald succeeded Maxwell as Lord Kitchener's "Fidus Achates," and was drowned with his Chief.

In 1897 Frank was again on active service, first with the 18th Lancers in the Samana and the Kurram Valley, and then as A.D.C. to his uncle, Gen. Sir William Lockhart, who commanded the Tirah Expedition. He was mentioned in despatches and awarded the D.S.O.

In 1899 Frank was given the coveted post of Adjutant of the 18th Bengal Lancers. By now he had become a first-rate horseman and horse-master ; he was a typical "Beau Sabreur," adored by his native officers and all ranks, who would follow him anywhere. He had no self apart from his men ; their interests were his interests.

No man worked harder in peace to train himself

and those under him for the demands of war, and he was a devoted student of his profession. On service his courage and tenacity of purpose in attacking the enemy were proverbial. He was always in the thick of the fight, and never lost an opportunity of putting to the test his exceptional skill in swordsmanship, mounted combat, and shooting.

In January, 1900, Frank went to South Africa in charge of remounts from India, but was soon transferred to Roberts' Horse, with which regiment he served until the end of the year.

For his gallantry at Sanna's Post he was awarded the V.C. under the following conditions :—

“Lieut. Maxwell was one of three officers not belonging to ‘Q’ Battery, R.H.A., specially mentioned by Lord Roberts as having shown the greatest gallantry and disregard of danger in carrying out the self-imposed duty of saving the guns of that battery during the affair of Korn Spruit on March 31st, 1900. This officer went out on five occasions and assisted to bring in two guns and three limbers, one of which he, Capt. Humphreys, and some gunners dragged in by hand. He also went out with Capt. Humphreys and Lieut. Stirling, to try to get the last gun in, and remained there till the attempt was abandoned. During a previous campaign (the Chitral Expedition of 1895) Lieut. Maxwell displayed gallantry in the removal of the body of Lieut.-Col. F. D. Battye, Corps of Guides, under fire, for which, though recommended, he received no reward.”

Frank was always concerned that some distinction was not conferred on his orderly. Dost

Muhammad Khan, who quietly held Frank's horse during the action, and though both man and horse were hit, he never said a word until his wounds were some time later discovered. He was eventually awarded the Indian Order of Merit. This faithful companion has since then been promoted to be a Native Officer in the 18th Lancers, and in other campaigns has won the Order of British India, the Indian Distinguished Service Medal, and was appointed A.D.C. to the Commander-in-Chief in India.

In December, 1900, Frank went as A.D.C. to Lord Kitchener. His first meeting with Lord Kitchener was always the subject of much amusement to his friends. Lord Kitchener was on the look out for an A.D.C., and had heard of a dashing young officer called Maxwell, but was sceptical of the judgment of others. Thinking the war was at an end, and having received urgent requests to return to duty with his regiment in India, Frank was preparing to leave South Africa, and was ordered to take despatches from Lord Roberts at Pretoria to Cape Town. While Lord Roberts was giving him his instructions Lord Kitchener joined them, and lost no time in singling him out for observation. History relates that Frank, finding himself the centre of the great Field-Marshal's gaze, became most uncomfortable, and wondered what he had done, or was wearing, to incur displeasure.

The situation was soon cleared, for when Lord Roberts withdrew Lord Kitchener asked Frank if he would come to him as an A.D.C.

Thinking there would be no more fighting, he, with his unconventional nature, declined the

invitation. However, Lord Kitchener suggested he had better think it over.

This he did during the journey to Cape Town, and coming to the conclusion that perhaps there might still be more fighting, he promptly returned to Pretoria and joined Lord Kitchener's Staff.

From this date there started between Lord Kitchener and "the Brat" an extraordinary kinship of feeling and sympathy which never waned. No two men understood each other better, and "the Brat's" outspoken conversations and chaff with Lord Kitchener became a by-word.

When Peace was finally ratified with the Boers Frank returned to England with Lord Kitchener, and in 1902 accompanied him to India.

He used constantly to speak of the happy relations that subsisted between Lord Kitchener and his personal Staff. That men like Maxwell, Hubert Hamilton, Birdwood, Victor Brooke, Marker, Barnes, and Fitzgerald should have been so devoted to their Chief and served him so long certainly bears testimony to a side of his character not always realised by the public.

As A.D.C. to Lord Kitchener in India no one was more at home in all companies or was better known in paper-chasing, polo, and pig-sticking circles. Frank carried everything before him on his favourite charger, "English Lord," the same Australian horse which was wounded at Sanna's Post, and afterwards established a great reputation with the Staff College Drag.

In 1904 Frank went to the Staff College at Camberley, and in 1906 married Miss Charlotte Osborne of Currandooley, New South Wales.

He returned with Mrs. Maxwell to India in February, 1907, and served with his regiment and in various Staff appointments until March, 1910, when he was sent to Australia as Instructing Officer of Light Horse. His naturalness and adaptability soon made him a "persona grata" with the "Diggers."

In November, 1910, he was once more back in India as Military Secretary to the Viceroy, and held that appointment throughout Lord Hardinge's tenure of office, and did not return to England till April, 1916.

For his work in connection with the Coronation Durbar he was given the C.S.I.

During the first eighteen months of the War Frank was eating his heart out that the Viceroy could not spare his services. His delight at being sent out to France within three weeks of his arrival in London was like that of a school boy.

He was shortly given command of the 12th Battalion Middlesex Regiment, which particularly distinguished itself in the taking of Trônes Wood, and later of Thiépval. For his gallantry at Thiépval Frank was awarded a bar to his D.S.O., and afterwards was promoted to Brevet-Col. In October, 1916, he was selected for the Command of the 27th Infantry Brigade, 9th (Scottish) Division, and commanded them continuously until he was killed in September, 1917. He was out at the time reconnoitring with his brigade-major and orderly, and a full account of what occurred, as described by his orderly in a letter to Mrs. Maxwell, is given at the end of the volume. His unorthodox methods of reconnaissance and complete disregard

of personal danger have been criticised, and it is only fair that his point of view, whether right or wrong, should be realised. There was never anything of bravado in his conduct, but he acted from a conviction that to seek safety was useless, while to run certain risks enabled a commander to gain invaluable knowledge, by which he might kill more of the enemy with slighter loss to his own troops. His attitude may be summarised in his own words, written from France shortly before he was killed :—

“ As a matter of fact, I don't believe in running from shells, unless quite certain that they are being fired at one—which is seldom—particularly with big stuff. Nor does bobbing appeal to me as being useful, while it certainly is quite undignified. If men are about, a pipe and upright posture show a better example.”

Three memorials fittingly perpetuate his name and pay homage to a gracious and cherished memory.

His friends on the Viceregal Staff have placed a tablet in the little Church of Boileaugang below Viceregal Lodge, Simla, where he often used to worship.

A tribute from the officers, non-commissioners, and men of the 27th Infantry Brigade (Scottish Division) is to be found in St. Giles's Cathedral, Edinburgh, with the following inscription :—

“ An ideal soldier and a very perfect gentleman, beloved by all his men.”

On the walls of the Chapel in the grounds of the United Services College, Windsor, which is an

offshoot of his old school, Westward Ho! the officers of his regiment have written his name as an inspiration to future generations :—

“ This Tablet records the love and admiration of his brother Officers for Frank Maxwell, V.C., C.S.I., D.S.O., Brevet-Colonel and Commandant 18th (King George’s Own) Lancers, killed in action on 21st Sept., 1917, and buried at Ypres—aged 46 years. Early in life he proved a born leader of men, and serving with distinction in many Campaigns gained the D.S.O. on the Indian Frontier, after being recommended for the V.C., which coveted honour he won later in South Africa. He was A.D.C. to Lord Kitchener, 1900–4, and Military Secretary to Lord Hardinge, Viceroy of India, 1910–16. In the Great War he commanded with pride the 12th Batt. Middlesex Regt., and for gallant leadership at the storming of Thiépval earned a bar to his D.S.O., and promotion to the rank of Brigadier-General.

“ Beloved and trusted by all ranks he laid down his life at the head of the Lowlanders of the 27th Infantry Brigade, 9th Scottish Division, on the blood-stained fields of Flanders.

“ The bravest of the brave—a true gentleman—a sportsman—and a great companion.”

## CHAPTER II

### EARLY YEARS—INDIAN FRONTIER

U.S. College,  
Westward Ho !  
June 19th, 1887.

MY DEAR MOTHER—

I am writing just after dinner. Yesterday morning at 9.45 the Confirmation Service began. It took place in our church for ourselves. There were twenty of us confirmed. I was confirmed third. After some prayers and hymns the Bishop (who is a delightful old man) gave us a short address. Our choir sang, and the whole of the college were present. The service was only an hour and a half long : it was tremendously hot. We were working till half-past nine, so we hadn't much time to change and see Mr. Willis before we were in church. Just before we went I got a letter and a little cardboard box from home, in which there was a little book called " The Narrow Pathway " from you, for which, dear mother, thank you very much : also a tie (a white one) and some pinks, which were, however, rather squashed and dead looking, so I didn't wear them ; but when they were put in water afterwards they revived marvellously, and are still looking perfectly fresh. Laurie offered me a rose, which I refused.

On Tuesday, Napier, David, and I are going to drive in a pony carriage to Torrington. We have plenty of money between us three, so don't think of sending us any, or we shall be obliged to send it back, with many thanks.

I am so much obliged to you for your and



father's letters on the Confirmation, as they helped me a great deal to consider what I am taking on myself to do. . . .

After leaving Sandhurst, in 1891, Frank Maxwell was sent to join the Royal Sussex Regiment in India, preparatory to being posted to the Indian Army or Indian Staff Corps, as it was then called. He was from December, 1893, to February, 1895, attached to the 24th Punjab Infantry, and when the Waziristan Expedition was undertaken in February, 1895, he was posted as Orderly Officer to the Officer Commanding Divisional Troops, the whole column being commanded by his uncle, Gen. Sir William Lockhart. The expedition had advanced some way into enemy country before he received his orders, and the first letter of this series describes his journey through tribal territory to join the Force.

Camp Mirzail,  
March 15th, 1895.

MY DEAR FAMILY—

Final orders have just come for us, and we are to be broken up to-morrow, the Border Regt. marching into Bannu to-morrow, and so on to Multan: the 5th Gurkhas going into Bannu, probably the day after to-morrow, there to remain as garrison. I shall then, I suppose, receive my *congé* and retire southwards. It is horribly disappointing, and even the excitement about Chitral has all subsided. It was the day after the mail left, I think, that Uncle W. got a wire saying that Dr. Robertson had retired fighting into Chitral. All sorts of war-like rumours floated about as this spread about, but next morning the wire was

officially contradicted, and although certain preparations have been made, at present all must appear peaceful, or we should not be going down.

The day after I last wrote was fought the biggest battle there has been on this business, but unfortunately it was attended by most unfortunate results, and so the whole business has been hushed up and is to be kept entirely out of the papers.

When the Waziristan Expedition ended, owing to the collapse of the tribal forces opposed to it, Frank Maxwell expected to return to his regiment, the 24th Punjab Infantry, at Delhi, but was transferred to the Guides Infantry at Mardan, and arrived there just in time for the Chitral Expedition, which started in April, 1895. He proceeded direct from Waziristan to join his new regiment, and the letters which follow deal with his experiences in Chitral.

### *To his Parents*

Camp Dargai,  
April 4th, 1895.

At 2.30 we got into Dargai under a great, long spur—the Malakand Pass—our objective for next day being on the other side of this and to the right. It was not an ideal place for a camp, being on a steep slope and covered with stones. However, with a good hole dug for one's hip to repose in, and some shrub stuff to dull the angles of the stones, one did oneself all right. Picquets crowned the crest of the spur, and from here with a strong telescope we could see the enemy in swarms on the hills in the Pass, climbing up and down and along the steep hill-sides with hundreds of flags.

Next morning, Wednesday, we were leading

regiment—which was good luck—and I was commanding one of the two advanced guard companies. We started at eight and pushed up the valley about two miles. The three mountain guns then took up a position on hill and opened fire, but found they were out of range. Advanced guard then pushed on with two Maxim guns and opened fire, but these also couldn't pick up the range. And now I must refer you to a bit of a sketch, for I doubt whether you would care to hear each phase of the attack. I shall confine myself to our own doings chiefly, as I know most about those.

Having arrived more or less within a mile of the enemy, we ceased to be an advanced guard, and our two companies, under Capt. Campbell and myself, were ordered to escort two Maxim guns up to a 2000 ft. high hill, standing up like St. Catherine's, absolutely by itself, unconnecting with any other hill. The rest of the regiment went up a spur further on, the 4th Sikhs up one a little back, the K.O.S.B.'s and Gordons going up the nullah slowly with orders to keep out of enemy's fire till Guides and 4th Sikhs had climbed up their respective spurs (*vide* sketch\*), turned to the right on the top, and then take the enemy in flank from high above and turn them out of their very strong position (steep rocks, "khud," with great stone breast works). This done they (K.O.B.) and Gordons were to move up the Pass, clear it of men, and go down the other side.

Well—my (I'll call them this for short, because they were really under Campbell, with me as his subaltern) two companies scaled this wretched hill on hands and knees, and arriving at the top, found to our disgust no Maxim guns were following. It was only for those that we had come up this

\* The sketch is unfortunately not available:

d—d hill, so we didn't waste breath on blessing them. It turned out that half-way up they were recalled, and had to go a different way; but it didn't occur to them to tell us. However, as we were there we sat tight and fired volleys on the enemy far away above on the crest of the hill we eventually reached. They kept on banging away at us, and we at them; but both were equally ineffective, I fancy, and after a time we thought that we were doing nobody any good, and by staying there would only be left out of the show, so scrambled down the cliff on the other side of that cliff we had come up. So arrived at the bottom we had all the climbing to do again to get up the huge main ridge, up which were our other six companies on our right and the 4th Sikhs on our left. Our route I have shown in the sketch, but that doesn't show what really difficult work we had to do in any kind of a way. The hill was precipitous, and intersected by numberless deep gullies or ravines—and all the going on great rocks growing on earth that gave way with every step, and to save oneself a fall, one continually clutched at some shrub—always thorn. Fortunately, both companies were Afridis—men accustomed to this work. Had they been Sikhs, we couldn't have done it. The three Sikhs there with us—my orderly and two signallers—were left clear behind, and didn't reach us or the top for three and a half hours after we arrived. The doctor, too, had come with us on advanced guard, and stuck to us. He, poor chap, was fairly well done by the first hill we had gone up and come down, and when he was asked to climb up 4000–5000 ft. more, he caved in before half-way up: so three of the most important people—not mentioning my orderly—were left behind fairly well done to a turn. And we felt the loss of them

all before we reached the top. Even the Afridis straggled after a time, but we had one and a half companies well together, and we volleyed the enemy above us and to our right, who were above our chaps (six companies), firing on them heavily and rolling down stones.

The six companies could only crawl up very slowly, and, in fact, could only advance as our volleys drove the enemy from each position higher and higher. Thus we clambered up 100 feet and sat down to take breath, then volleyed the enemy at first from 1300 yards, then, finally, at 400-500 yards, and each time dislodged the enemy, and so let our six companies push up a little further. In this way we slowly pushed up the hill, the 4th Sikhs working away to our left rear and doing a lot of firing. Down below, stretching like a panorama, we could see the K.O.B.'s and Gordons and the 1st Brigade and three batteries all formed up, ready to push up into the pass, the guns—now off the hills and in the cornfields—shelling the enemy. And now and then we could hear pop-pop, pop-pop, or rattle of the Maxim guns. And now came the mistake of the whole engagement. General Lowe (Commander-in-Chief), instead of letting us and 4th Sikhs do what we were ordered by our Brigadier, and which we were just about to do, having got three-quarters of the way up, what should he do but "go for to think" that we were having too bad a time of it with the enemy, and being so devastated by his fire that if we ever reached the top of the hill we should have no men to do the turning movement. Well, thinking this, he orders the K.O.S.B.'s and Gordons, supported by 60th Rifles and Bedfords, to attack the hill overlooking the Pass, and on which, as I have already mentioned, the enemy were swarming behind stone parapets, etc.

So up they went, and, of course, had a most difficult job, and it was here that all our losses occurred. I can't tell you how this attack went on, because, of course, from where we were we couldn't see them, and were too busy with driving out our friends above. It was not until we met our six companies on the top (amid great hurrahs and dhol beating and sirinai-blowing) that we found that the tit-bit we had been looking forward to all along was just being snatched from us; and as we afterwards found out, by a blunder and with considerable loss, when there might have been none. For as you, father, will explain to the others, all we had to do was to go down the ridge to the right (I'll mark it thus → on the sketch) and pour in fire from above and on the flank of the enemy, with almost absolute safety to ourselves, as far as their fire was concerned. Then having cleared the enemy out of this great position of theirs, the others below would have had an easy job, and going up the face of the position (now empty) have pursued them over the other side—our work being done. But by the time we arrived on the top of the great hill (6000 feet high) and, as I say, looked down upon the enemy's position (3400 feet high—so 2600 feet below us) the Gordons and other regiments were more than three-quarters of the way up.

The six companies at once went down—but arrived too late to help, and we remained on the top and kept off the enemy, the 4th Sikhs doing the same, more to our left.

Then we sat from 2.30 (the time we got to the top) till 6.45, having a magnificent panorama below us. I wish I had made a proper sketch of it now—not that I could do so. Down at the foot of the Pass (on the India side of it) were hundreds of transport mules packed closely,

above them an enormously high ridge perfectly precipitous, on their front the now vacated enemy's position with the tiny and most difficult Pass. On the plateau above enemy's position were two or three regiments and burning huts. Down on the other side of the Pass were the enemy hooking it all they knew, with one or two regiments some way behind blazing at them. The enemy sought refuge in another small ridge of hills, and driven from there went on to a huge village near the Swat River, which flows about three miles in rear of position—or appears to be about that distance. Altogether it was a most interesting sight.

*Friday.* I left off this yesterday to see to loading of some mules. At about 6.45 we and 4th Sikhs got orders to return to Dargai Camp, and you can imagine how sick we were. Here we were, five miles from Camp Dargai, and nearly as many thousand feet above it, and all day we had been carrying great-coats and a day's rations, being ordered when we started to bivouac the night on the Pass, when we had taken it. So down we plodded and joined the remainder of the regiment on the enemy's position, and then after a halt on back to Dargai, which we reached at 11.30 p.m.—so had a fairly long day—and, by Jove, didn't we sleep!

Later we discovered that Gen. Lowe ordered us back, thinking we had no rations with us.

Next day the politicals said the enemy acknowledged to 500 casualties. I saw Watt (an R.M.C. friend) in the Gordons yesterday, and he had, he told me, two rather narrow escapes. Once he had his shoulder-strap cut by a bullet that passed through the head of a lance-corporal a yard in front of him, killing him; then later on he got up on to a place before his men, all absolutely blown,

and was at once made for by a dozen men; he killed three with his revolver, and then, it being empty, he had to jump down again among his men. In doing this, his sword fell out of his scabbard and pierced the fleshy part of his thigh, but did no harm. Another fellow in the Gordons, Kerr, had a narrow escape, due to no merit of his own weapons. Seeing an enemy bearing down on him, he twice snapped his revolver, and twice missed fire, when the man, being almost on him, another officer close behind shot him. The fellow in his fall fell on to Kerr's sword point, which he had exchanged for his revolver, and instead of going in, this excellent weapon doubled up like a whalebone. So he could hardly have escaped, had the chap not been shot for him.

The 1st Brigade stayed on the Pass during the night, having their baggage with them, and all of us 2nd Brigade, as I before said, marched back to Dargai pretty well done, having been up at 6 a.m. and not back till 11.30 p.m. On our way down the hill we saw numbers of the enemy lying dead, all dressed in white clothes, which, of course, made them good targets. Coming down by a side path I came on a dead fellow, when up ran a little bugler—a Gurkha—gave the body a heave over to one side, seized its sword, and cut away ahead. I saw him afterwards, and asked him what he wanted it for, especially as he had left the scabbard (for in his hurry to escape my notice he hadn't time to unfasten the scabbard). He replied by pointing to his sword bayonet, and said: "What's the good of this kind of thing, Sahib, and it's the only weapon I have." The bayonet is straight, and I don't believe a native could use a straight-edged sword, and certainly doesn't know its use, viz. the point, for he always cuts, and with as curved a blade as possible.



Next morning, Thursday, we all expected a day of rest, as the Pass was blocked with the 1st Brigade baggage, and they heliographed that it would take all day nearly to get them over. But notwithstanding this, our brigade was ordered off at an hour's notice to go up the pass. So everything was loaded up and off we went. Hardly had we gone half a mile from camp when the order came to halt and encamp where we were, so strolling into the nearest field we encamped. It seemed so unnecessary to have made a mistake like this, for instead of staying quietly in camp we were hustled off, and it takes a long time for a large brigade to move off with all its kit, light though it is, and then having got fairly under weigh to have to unload again and do all encamping work over again.

Later on, half the regiment and remainder of brigade started again, and got up the Pass all right. The other half remained with the Commissariat as guard—I among them. The 3rd Brigade, who saw nothing of Wednesday's fight, being some five miles in rear of Dargai, encamped on our left.

*Friday.*—This morning our half-regiment marched to the foot of the Pass, but here we are halted, the camels unable to go up the steep, rough path. Even mules have a bad time, and three were killed this morning. The 23rd Pioneers are hard at work now making a road for camels, and hope to have it ready to-morrow morning; if it is, we shall join our brigade. At present the order of things is 1st Brigade over the Pass by Swat River, 2nd Brigade, bar ourselves, on the Pass; 3rd Brigade just arrived at foot of Pass are encamping by ourselves. Divisional troops and lines of communications between here and Mardan.

The 1st Brigade, we hear, had some fighting

yesterday and to-day to get to the Swat River. At this moment the hills are echoing with continual explosions, pioneers and sappers being hard at work blasting.

Latest news of Sir Umra Khan,\* K.C.B., is that he is marching down to meet us. I hope he will not funk and so change his mind.

Yesterday Edwardes of 4th Gurkhas came into camp, and after asking me a question, asked if my name was not Maxwell. He then told me who he was—an O.U.S.C.—his sobriquet "Two-penny," and then I remembered him. It is his brother that is missing with Fowler in Chitral; but when I asked him, he said he was quite hopeful about him. But in the papers, dated April 2nd, they say that it is quite improbable that either he or Fowler will ever be seen again. It is rumoured that Umra Khan has two British officers with him; perhaps these may be they.

I heard from Bill yesterday, and he says he has written to Col. Craigie to get him up on this show, and exhorts me to shove in a word, too. I haven't seen him yet, and am afraid shall not know him if I do. However, I'll find him if I can. And now I'll stop for to-day, and make ready for a tub, having only washed down to my girths for a whole week. We have rigged up a beautiful little bathroom out of commissariat bags, with a tarpaulin as a roof. Glasgow, of my old regiment, is here, doing transport and commissariat work. Scott, also of the old regiment, is on the same job in 1st Brigade.

Your most affectionate son,

FRANK.

\* Umra Khan had invaded Chitral, murdered his half-brother, Nizam-ul-Mulk, whom the British Government had acknowledged as Mehtar of Chitral, and set himself up as ruler. It was to punish Umra Khan and avenge Nizam-ul-Mulk that this expedition was undertaken.

Camp Sado,  
April 12th, 1895.

MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER—

. . . At Aladand we found two regiments of our brigade had been in action, also the 11th Bengal Lancers and squadron of our cavalry. Three miles from Aladand the Swat River runs, and across this were a great many enemy, and the 4th Sikhs, and K.O.S.B.'s, and 15th Sikhs (latter belonging to 1st Brigade) were ordered to ford the river and clear them.

Arrived at the river, they found the enemy holding the far bank in swarms, with hills about 1000 yards behind them, and one hill within 400 yards of them giving them a very fine position. In spite of the volleys of all three regiments, and the fire of the redoubtable Maxim guns, which mowed them down, on they swarmed down to the river. Not an inch could our fellows make them budge, and they fired heavily on us—but mad, bad practice. All of a sudden the enemy wavered, and, suddenly turning, fled for the hills, and looking about for the cause, the infantry found that the Guides Squadron had forded the river higher up, and were being followed by all the 11th Bengal Lancers.

They say they never saw such a sight, and couldn't believe that men who had stood their hot volleys for so long would be so panic stricken at the sight of cavalry. Then it was the cavalry's turn, and catching many of them before they could reach the hills, killed eighty; the infantry and Maxim guns accounted for rather more. The K.O.S.B.'s, 4th Sikhs, and 15th Sikhs, crossed the river, and very difficult it was.

Six miles' march on the other side of river, up a beautiful valley, sullied here and there by a cavalry-made corpse, brought us to the junction

of the Lacum and Katgola Passes, and here we had a three hours' halt, awaiting orders. Getting none, we left the 11th Bengal Lancers at the junction and pushed on another seven miles to head of the Katgola Pass, we being ourselves, battery, and Squadron Guides. This must have been one of Umra Khan's strongholds, but we advanced quietly up, the cavalry reconnoitring ahead, reporting all clear—and, in truth, I expect they had had enough the day before. It was not until 8 o'clock that we found a strong position for camp, and luckily for us, we had a glorious moon. Everybody was more or less on the *qui vive*, for our tiny camp would have been a very tempting morsel for Umra Khan. Half the regiment was on picquet duty, so after the long day, 7 a.m. till 8 p.m., half the poor men were on duty. It was amusing to watch the fires being lighted on the different hills soon after our arrival, and to see them answered and re-answered right away down the Pass—and bearing away north again, round the corner, so to speak. However, in spite of a "non-pyjama" night, all was quiet, and next day (10th) at mid-day we moved nine miles down the Pass to a village called Shamshakhan, being joined that night by the 4th Sikhs.

Next morning (10th) we again thrust on our force, augmented by 4th Sikhs, the remainder of brigade being some sixteen miles behind. Dividing the force, we took two different ways, arriving at the Panjkora River after nine to ten miles' march. From there we could see a large fort of Umra Khan's five miles across the river burning, and in it we were told were tons of grain, etc. The smoke filled the valley and hid the hills, so dense was it. The squadron then forded the river, very deep, being up to the horses' croup and very swift, and immediately sent back

word that Umra Khan was seven miles off and waiting to fight us. This was most exhilarating, for we were a nice, compact little body, and should have all the show to ourselves—so we thought. So while awaiting further reports from the cavalry, we enquired from the few natives we saw where there was a ford for infantry. And you may imagine our disgust when they said there was none—absolutely none for foot people. . . .

Next morning we set to and tried to build rafts, dismantling deserted villages for beams. But it was all of no avail, and when the rafts were made, after a fashion, they wouldn't float, and we had no ropes to pull them backwards and forwards. . . .

This morning I went out early with a fatigue party, to collect beams from a village and take them down to the river bank to where Aylmer \* (R.E., V.C.) was starting to make a bridge. We worked for four hours, and then came back, as the regiment had been ordered to cross the river by raft (under fresh construction by skilled engineer work). We were cheerfully assured by everybody that if we did by an off-chance escape drowning we should undoubtedly be cut off and cut up by Umra Khan to-night. As a matter of fact, our own brigadier was most against the idea of our going, but Gen. Lowe insisted on our going across by ourselves and staying across there until the rest of the brigade could come by bridge. And there we should have been now, but, unfortunately for us, for we should have been almost bound to have had some fun, the sapper failed to complete the raft, and he is still at it. It is now 5 o'clock, and they calculated it would take four hours to cross even 100 men. So the order has been

\* General Sir F. J. Aylmer, V.C., afterwards Adjutant-General in India.

countermanded for to-day, but with any luck we should be across first thing to-morrow morning, and the bridge is not likely to be finished till mid-day to-morrow at earliest. So we shall be again on our own hook.

A letter from Fowler and Edwards came in yesterday, and ran thus: "Fowler and Edwards are shut up in Barwar" (eleven miles from here). "Can you get us out? People hereabouts panic. Give bearers of this R.50 each. P.S.—Shall we make a bolt for it?" This note, addressed to no one, was brought over to us yesterday, so we had a good look at it. The men got their 50 rupees each yesterday, and had a long interview in the Headquarters Camp yesterday night. Young Edwards (in 3rd Gurkhas, who is up here) was allowed in at the consultation, and told me when he came out that excellent arrangements had been made with the two messengers, but he was not at liberty to say what they were. But he was quite satisfied that all would be well with his brother. Poor chap, he has been told often enough by the papers that his brother is dead, won't be seen again, etc., etc., so it must have been a relief to know for certain by seeing his brother's handwriting that he was safe up to seventh of this month. . . .

15th.—Having missed the mail which went yesterday, I must now make this letter be good for two mails. You will see later why and how I missed the mail. I will now resume from where I left off in a hurry. At 5.45 p.m. we were ordered to be ready at the bridge (now ready for foot traffic) at 6.30. Having to pack up camp and march two miles along a narrow path, we did not get there till dark at 7.30, and got over the last of the little kit we took at midnight. The regiment was strung round in a semi-circle—one

company was left on home side of the river, Codrington and I having to stay with it. After a late dinner with the others on the far side, we re-crossed the river and bivouacked on the top of a steep hill right above the regiment. To bed at 1.30. We were roused at 3.30, and getting down to the river by 4, found the bridge much damaged by flood and logs. Just as C. and I were a few yards across it, bang came an immense log against one of the rafts supporting the roadway, and nearly chucked us into the river. However, we pressed on, and ten minutes later the water was pouring over the bridge, and the company could not get over. We had a little breakfast, and then hung about for dawn, and didn't actually start on our mission (village burning) until 6.30, leaving a company to guard camp. Having already one company as personal escort to Gen. Lowe, one on further bank, and one as guard on this side, we left with only five companies.

Our orders were to burn and destroy, and this we did. Then crossing another little river running at right angles into the big one (Panjkora) we had some firing at snipers, and looted 100 head of cattle, sending them back to camp. We scaled a high ridge of hills and sent down a party to the valley below to burn. From our high position we could see right up the Jhandul Valley and Barwar in the distance. Some six to seven miles off we could see thousands of the enemy on both flanks moving about like ants, the column on one side of the river appearing to be advancing. Their subsequent movements I did not see, being sent off with Codrington to support the valley party, should any one fire. Meanwhile, the Colonel and the others, from where we had left them, saw these great numbers advancing, signalled back to headquarters across the river (some four miles

away altogether) to that effect. He (Col. Battye) then ordered us valley people to retire, which we did, suspecting nothing. Arriving down at the Panjkora River, we could hear our chaps right above firing, but thought it was only probably at a few Utman Khels, whose villages we had been burning. So we went on. Then across the river bank (Panjkora) we could see the Headquarter Staff opposite us, they having ridden from camp, being evidently disturbed by the firing going on. Shouting across the river, an officer told us to tell Col. Battye to retire from the heights covered by the two companies with us. All this time we had thought Col. Battye with the other three companies must be nearly down the hill, having, as we thought, started at the same time as we did. Now we knew that he and the others with him did not see us retiring, and thought we weren't doing so, and therefore clung to his heights, seeing as he did that the masses of the enemy we had seen in the distance and thought so harmless were now coming actually up the hill of the ridge he was holding. Codrington and Stewart taking the two companies up the spur shown, I went up ahead of them, as hard as I could, to give the message about retiring, even now scarcely guessing what was happening. As I got near the top I grasped the situation all at once, for under showers of bullets the two companies (third under Percy E. L. going down another spur) were just retiring from their position on the top. I gave the message to the Colonel, though it was unnecessary, more or less, but told him he had two companies below to support his retreat. Finding myself there, I jolly well stayed there, and a most exciting time we had. Slowly, slowly, we retired, keeping the enemy at a distance of 300-500 yards; at first, something like 700 yards. We had some men



wounded here, but on the whole got off lightly, as the people above were firing high.

The difficult part came towards the bottom, very steep and with no cover, and over this we had necessarily to retire quicker ; seeing this they tore down upon us simply in swarms. I can't describe what happened, it was all far too exciting. Now comes the sad part. At the bottom of the spur the ground ran away perfectly flat to the Panjkora (800 yards) and to the other little river a little further distance, the two joining at right angles, the spur running down into the angle. Before we reached the bottom it was a case of turning round and just shooting the nearest man with one's revolver, and driving our own men (the plucky fellows, about half a dozen, wouldn't go on) down to the flat. On the flat, but I can't tell you all about it, one hadn't time to think ; all I know is, that while I was reloading my revolver the Colonel was shot, and three Dogras were lifting him up when I got to him. We carried him back, our fellows rallying about 100 yards back, and keeping the enemy from us. Once all four of us tripped over something and fell heavily with the dying Colonel. Then our men came up with a cheer, passed us, and drove back the enemy up the hill. It seemed ages before the doctor came. He was shot clean through the body, and was very nearly dead before the doctor came up—once he moaned for water. Having bandaged him, we again lifted him, and under cover of fire from the whole brigade on opposite bank of Panjkora, with two batteries (they had been working all the time), we crossed the small river, and then put our burden on to a stretcher. After that we retired, all worn out, turning every hundred yards to fire, and all the time a tremendous fusilade going on from opposite bank of Panjkora

from 75th, 25th, 4th Sikhs, 23rd Pioneers, three Maxim guns, and two batteries, covering our retreat against the swarms on the hill. No one, of course, could cross the river to help us, the bridge by which we had crossed having been completely swept away.

At about 6.30, I suppose it was, we got back to our camp by the river's bank, and immediately had to set to and entrench ourselves very strongly. But every one was just dead beat. Our killed were Col. Battye, three men, and some ten men wounded. No one knows how we got off so cheaply, except perhaps that it was again the steepness of the hills that made the bullets fly over us.\*

Night found us completing our entrenchments, and we were joined by two Maxim guns—a most welcome sight they were—that had been sent on by raft. The men, having made so early a start, had had no food in the morning, and now no fires being allowed, they got none; we officers had a biscuit, and then began the longest night I have ever spent. We lined about 300 yards of breast-work with 300 men in them, and 100 or so being behind us as a support also entrenched. These latter were lucky, and slept. Every man of the first line worked the live-long night—at least those who could absolutely be kept awake. For four hours they fired into camp from very close quarters, and killed a poor Gurkha and wounded another very seriously. We ordered the men not to fire, but their nerves were by this time so strung that they repeatedly poured a volley into the darkness, thinking they saw men creeping up. Twice the guns on the other bank fired rockets,

\* For his gallantry in this action Frank Maxwell was recommended for the V.C. and his services brought to the special notice of the C.-in-C. in India.

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and then we gave orders for firing the rockets, showing up the enemy clearly.

At 1.30 the moon rose, and, beyond occasional sniping, they left us alone, keeping up instead continuous yelling and tom-tomming and lighting enormous fires on the hill-sides. Gradually, from sheer exhaustion, many of the men, kneeling as they were in the trench, just slept where they were, we walking about seeing that a good many kept awake. How we watched for dawn, and how long it seemed to come, I can't tell you. For an hour before it came (5.30) every man was awakened, as we expected an attack, but none came. As light came our spirits rose, and like asses, we potted about the camp out of cover, and got the khansamah to light a fire for tea. And not until Peebles (Captain in Devon Regiment), in command of two Maxim guns, had been shot through the stomach in the midst of us, and immediately after one of his Tommies in the leg, were we aware that they still had some dangerously good shots on the hill 900 yards away from us. Peebles was splendidly plucky, and pulled out his shirt quite calmly and showed us the wound. The doctor then appeared, and we got orders from headquarters to at once advance, seize the hill, and hold it.

So out we had to turn, foodless and tired, and the beggars above us ping-pinging away at us, dropping shot all round us; but we had luck, and got over the open without loss, and pressing on up the hill, the fellows were gone long before we reached the top. This hill was not the one of the great ridge we had been on the day before, but only a low strip facing our camp. Here all day we were left in the burning sun, the men still without food. At 12 or so we (officers) had some breakfast, but not until about 3 p.m. did the men

get theirs—made for them by 25th P. I., Guides Cavalry, and 4th Sikhs, and sent across river by raft. All day the 4th Sikhs crossed by raft, where the bridge had been, and as they crossed joined us. If the night had been long, the day was almost equally so, for from 6.30 a.m. till 6.30 p.m. we lay out in the sun on the bare, rocky ridge, dead tired, and just lying down and sleeping, with one's head stuffed into a tuft of scrub for shade.

The K.O.S.B.'s were also to have reinforced us, but the 4th Sikhs were so long in getting across that they couldn't. At night we entrenched ourselves and had the first meal for forty-eight hours, and we were fairly ready for it. We bivouacked behind the men with good hard rock as a mattress. However, that didn't much matter; but what did make us uncomfortable was torrents of rain about an hour after turning down. Most of us had a mackintosh sheet to cover us, but though they kept off the water from the top of our bodies, the water ran down the hill and washed us wet through. But we were tired, and I think most of us managed lots of sleep in spite of it all.

Your most affectionate son,

FRANK.

At the conclusion of the Chitral Expedition, Frank Maxwell was transferred from the Guides Infantry to the 24th Punjabis, and served with them until January, 1896, when he was posted to the 18th Bengal Lancers, the regiment to which he had always hoped to belong. Soon after he had a severe attack of enteric, which necessitated his taking six months' leave home, from March to September, 1897. When he returned from

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leave his regiment was on service with the Kurram Field Force, operating above Thal on the North-West Frontier against the Orakzai Afridis. He joined them in the middle of September, but after a few days was ordered to go as A.D.C. to his uncle, Gen. Sir William Lockhart, who was in command of the Tirah Field Force, then concentrated at Kohat for the invasion of Tirah. The letters in this series commence with his journey down from the Kurram to Kohat and the Expedition into tribal territory, which followed.

Krappa,  
Oct. 22nd, 1897.

MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER—

Here we are at last, actually on the move. But I will relate events, such as they are, as they happen.

On the 18<sup>th</sup>, the enemy having collected in large numbers above the road from Shinami (south side of Samana) to Krappa (north side) in Khanki Valley, Uncle W. decided to drive them off the heights they were holding. Accordingly two brigades from Shinami were ordered up to storm and take the enemy's position. We from Fort Lockhart rode out the seven miles to end of the Samana to watch the fight which took place on the opposite side of the gorge to us—the Chagru Kotal dividing the two heights by about 3000 yards—so that we could, with glasses, see all that was going on. The movement of one brigade we couldn't follow at all, but of the other, consisting of K.O.S.B.'s, Northamptons, and 2nd Gurkhas, we could see plainly.

To cut the matter fairly short, two batteries were on the Kotal, and fired at 1700 yards range

on to cliff held by enemy, while the infantry, led by the Gurkhas, worked up to the foot of the cliff. The position was a tremendously strong one, the sheer cliff being approached by only one rugged path. Before, however, it was necessary for the infantry to go up it, the enemy had fled, the other brigade having, by a very difficult and precipitous route, got round their flank, so the brigade we were watching got up all right, having lost four killed and about nineteen wounded, Gurkhas having the majority of losses.

The other brigade got up with scarcely a scratch. Meanwhile, at about 1 p.m. we had spotted a large body of Afridis marching up from the Khanki Valley, as if to attack the position taken, so we signalled across to our people, telling them. Also they were told to burn the villages and return back to Shinami. This last order seems to the ordinary person to have been a mistake (much too often practised in frontier warfare, almost always with same result). However, I mustn't be disloyal to my Chief, and so will say no more about it. At any rate, instead of holding the position taken, our people were ordered to retire. Usual thing happened—enemy came down on our fellows retiring, and gave them a warmish time, the Gordons, 15th Sikhs, and 3rd Gurkhas—the brigade we couldn't see—coming in for it worst, their losses being: Gordons, three killed (including Major Jennings Bramley) and fifteen wounded (including one officer); Ghurkhas, one killed, four wounded; 15th Sikhs, three killed, one wounded. And the brigade wasn't in camp until 11 p.m., having been out since 4 p.m. Total losses for day being ten killed and forty-three wounded.

Next day we held hard. (Excuse bad writing and mistakes. I can only see with one eye, and

have just been sick, result of bad water here.) On 20th, 2nd Division, under General Yeatman Biggs, was ordered to go from Shinami to Krappa, and was given two extra battalions and a battery to do what he liked with, as regards covering his passage down the Valley, while the Northampton Regiment and one battery from Fort Lockhart held the Samana Ridge (from which we had viewed the battle of the 18th).

General Y. B., however, got it into his head that he could not go down the road to Krappa without the same strong position that enemy held on 18th being retaken. This he tried to do without a flanking brigade, and by merely a frontal attack, hoping to dislodge the enemy by the fire of two batteries from the Chagun Kotal below. As a matter of fact, he could quite well have sent his whole division down the road with but little interference from the enemy, at any rate, from the aforesaid position. Uncle W. did not come out to see the division go down to Krappa, not expecting this to be any show. However, Haldane and I rode out seven miles and saw it all, and it proved to be a much more serious affair than that of 18th.

At about 10 a.m. two batteries from the Kotal, and another from the end of Samana, where we were watching, opened fire on to the enemy's position (same old one on the cliff), while the 2nd Gurkhas, Dorset Regiment, Derby Regiment, 3rd Sikhs, and Gordons, were sent up the hill to take it.

Anyway, the result was that the Gordons and 3rd Sikhs were pushed up under the spur. Here they halted, and the 75th were addressed by their C.O. (I'm told this by a Gordon), who said that the position *must* be taken, cost what it might, even if the whole regiment was killed. The men all

cheered, and then the business began. Instead of going across by driblets, the whole lot, as fast as they could get clear of the protecting ridge, rushed across the open, pipes playing, and, by Jove, they got across, and went up that path followed by the 3rd Sikhs; but, alas! not without heavy losses, forty-three Gordons alone, including one officer killed, and two seriously wounded, and four slightly. The enemy, seeing they meant business, didn't wait, but ran, and the Gordons, Sikhs, and the few Gurkhas who had been lying under the cliff, had only the meagre satisfaction of firing at their wretched tails when they got to the top. Wasn't this a grand piece of work? The sickening part of it was that Haldane and I, seeing how things were going at about 2 p.m., left and galloped back to tell the General (Uncle W.) at Fort Lockhart what a mess everything was in, *i.e.* division stuck on the Kotal, five regiments engaged in uselessly trying to take enemy's position by frontal attack, and things generally at a deadlock.

About one and a half hours later the Gordons were ordered up and took it, and we missed this magnificent sight. Haldane and I were really almost glad to get away from the scene, as it was too sickening to see our troops being kept at bay like this. The guns made absolutely no impression on the enemy, for the cliff was naturally loopholed by deep clefts, in which they lay, and the guns firing at the cliff from an angle, had, of course, no effect.

Well, the position was taken all right, and this time the troops kept it for the night.

21st.—That is yesterday—we left Fort Lockhart at 6.30 a.m. and came to this place, arriving after a long and most difficult march down about 6000 ft. of hill at about 3.30 p.m. There was but



little riding possible, and Uncle W. must have walked about nine miles, which is a good step for him after having done nothing of this sort for a long time; but it suits him, and he ate like blazes when the gent did get in at about 8.30 p.m. The whole division came on by dribblets to this place, and I never saw such a muddle in my life.

The 2nd Division Staff don't yet know their work, so instead of the camp being laid out in some sort of order, and staff officers ready to show regiments their places, there was chaos; then firing began all round, and regiments just in had to go out and drive away the enemy. Baggage animals were streaking in all over the place, asking their way to their particular owners. We didn't get our kit till about 8 p.m. (having started at 6.30 a.m.), and then only a portion of it came in, its guard of 36th Sikhs having to lie out all night some way from camp, and came in this morning with the rest. Regiments were sounding the regimental calls and rally in the river bed, with the object of showing their respective transport guards the way to camp.

At about 10 p.m. we had some heavy firing into camp, but no casualties, our picquets answering by volleys; only one jolly old bullet came buzzing over our particular heads. Uncle W. lay in a little tent *d'abri*—rest of us bivouacked, and will do so for many days to come. He would do the same, but we won't let him.

This morning he went up to the Gordon camp, and gave them an excellent little address, saying how proud he was of their fine behaviour on the 20th, and that he would be calling on them again before long, and knew that they would respond when he did. . . .

Krappa,  
begun Oct. 27th, 1897.

MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER—

Since writing we had one rather troublesome night with the enemy. They began firing into camp in broad daylight at 5 p.m., and having ascertained the correct position of the head-quarter camp, in the centre of the large one, began putting in bullets most accurately. Fortunately, not without many pooh-poohs from the Uncle, a couple of us had fallen in a fatigue party and built an eight-foot wall of grain bags round his tent before the fire became very hot, for we had not finished five minutes when two bullets crashed into the wall—one of which would have found its billet in the G.O.C. T.E. Force, without the smallest doubt, had no wall been there, while the other would have whistled very near him too. Casualties came in quite thick for a short time: a mule driver killed, a mule shot; then a bearer shot, and then another mule driver; finally Badcock, of the 3rd Gurkhas (Intelligence Officer attached to headquarters), had his left arm smashed by a bullet, and Gen. Spragge (Com. R.A.) had his horse shot in the stomach. The poor beast suffered agonies till they gave it a large dose of opium, and while still under its effect died at midnight. Badcock had his arm amputated yesterday, poor fellow. Isn't it a sickening way of losing one's arm! Altogether there were some fifty men killed and wounded during the evening. We all dined without lamps; and the enemy, after having made two or three pretty hot attacks on the camp between 9 and 10 p.m., retired to rest. Some star shells were fired from camp, and these they hate.

Yesterday we tried different tactics, crowning the hill all round camp with picquets of four

companies' strength. This had the desired effect, and not a shot was fired into camp all night, though Colonel Hadow, 15th Sikhs, got a bullet through his calf during the afternoon, and from quite a random shot.

The extraordinary thing about these fellows is that they are such wonderful shots—taking up positions at from 1200–1800 yards and making the most accurate shooting. . . .

Maidan, Tirah,  
Nov. 16th, 1897.

MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER—

Many thanks for the letters from you, Mother, and Maimie, and for Father's forwarded *viâ* the brothers. All news good from home, which is excellent.

On the day after I wrote last one brigade under Kempster, consisting of Gordons, Dorsets, 2nd Gurkhas, 15th Sikhs, 36th Sikhs, and two batteries, went from here over a small pass into the Warar Valley—there to sit and eat, and destroy Zakkha Khel villages. They had a fairly good time, though they had one bad night, and how they fared on their way back yesterday I will tell you of in its proper turn. Here arrangements were made by the politicals to pay for fodder taken, on condition that they didn't fire and we wouldn't burn. We got the forage all right, but they didn't stick to their bargain altogether, firing a few shots as our people retired.

That night, while sitting in our hut at mess, we were roused by firing close at hand, but thought nothing of it, thinking it was our escort picquet firing twenty yards off. However, a fellow hard by came out of his tent and growled out that his tent had been shot through, so three of us thought we would go across and chaff him. So out we

innocent young lambs went, and getting unawares on to the sky-line (looking, that is, from the nullah opposite) we promptly had a volley slung at us from about seventy yards off. Down we all flumped on our fronts, and there we lay gurgling with laughter, for it was too absurd for words. Then we did a record to the nearest cover, and snakes were not in it with us, I assure you. It's quite easy to wriggle along (under pressure) on one's front, and when I get home I'll show you on the drawing-room floor how we did it; but somebody must stand over me with a loaded gun, or my motion would probably not be so rapid.

The sportsmen who "done" this were half-way up the opposite side of the nullah to us. We sat almost bang on the edge of one side, and fifty to sixty yards across these gents came. Uncle Willy and their mess were safe enough, fortunately, as there is a house between them and the nullah. Our sentries and picquets returned no fire, which, after all, is the best, for they can't see.

On the 15th, Uncle W., his Chief of Staff, Haldane, Smith, and I, escorted by the squad of my regiment,\* rode over the Arhanga Pass to the Mastura Valley to look up the brigade there, and found all ship-shape. The day before their foraging party had been attacked, and two officers and some men wounded. Major Money of my regiment, who has a squad there, was one of the wounded, and had a lucky escape. A bullet caught him on his belt, ran along to the buckle, and then glanced away. The shock spun him round, but didn't knock him down, and all the damage done was a hole scraped in his belt and tremendous painful bruise all along his stomach. Uncle W. and the others had lunch with the General (Hart), so Smith and I carried off the tiffin mule to where

\* 18th Bengal Lancers.

Money's squad lived, and where the four officers of the squad from here had gone, and we stood them a very fine lunch. . . .

That night again our bold friends returned to the same spot as the night before, and fired heavily into us, wounding at first only a few tents, a mule, and a horse. Thirty Gurkha scouts were, however, out in front of us, and were not long coming into collision with them, it being pitch dark. While at mess, however, we heard to our surprise the British picquet next to our escort picquet fire a volley—this contrary to strict orders, the Gurkhas being out. I ran in and told Uncle W. in his mess what had happened, but they all (such is the deception of sound) thought the volley had been fired from the opposite end of camp. However, I was certain, so was sent off to find out. . . .

Later on the Gurkhas came in and reported that four out of the thirty in advance had run plump against about a dozen of the enemy. The poor little Gurkhas gave themselves away by calling out "Kaun Hai" (thinking that they might be Tommies returning to camp from a picquet right outside, some quarter of a mile away. No one knows why they should have thought so). They were promptly answered by a volley which killed one of them, and they replied by laying low four of the enemy, then each party, picking up its dead, retired its own way. Pools of blood verified this story clearly in the morning—excuse gruesome details. These Ghurka scouts had nailed four of them before dusk just by the camp—a party of the enemy doing their usual game of sneaking into the houses or ruins of houses near camp, with intent to fire into it.

Now comes the 16th, yesterday, which was a bad day for us, and a very bad day, we hope, for the enemy.

Kempster's Brigade from Waran—eight miles off—started early by sending their baggage and forage over the Pass, and it all came in by about 2 p.m. All the regiments got over the Kotal (Pass) well, the 15th Sikhs being left to hold it. Here apparently occurred bad generalship, for the 15th were not ordered to retire until the next regiment to them had gone two to two and a half miles back. Then when ordered to do so, they could not, and a picquet of some forty to fifty men under two British officers were caught by the enemy on the top of a small wooded hill above the Kotal. The enemy swarmed out on them as they (the picquet) were trying to get away, and then the forty men turned on them and just gave them death all round at close quarters, driving some hundred of them back to the wood above, and leaving nearly eighty to one hundred of them lying dead all round. Then some of the 15th below and 4th company of 36th Sikhs were ordered up to bring them down, as they had a good many killed and wounded. It was dusk by now, and the colonel of the 15th, having been wounded, the 36th C.O. took command and gave it as his opinion, against the others, that they should get down off the hill *at once* and not wait for dark. This undoubtedly saved them, so getting altogether they came down the hill as hard as they could, being but little hurt by the fire from the enemy above, as it was almost dark. Then, marching along down the terraced ground, they were all of a sudden surrounded by a close and heavy fire, and old Houghton (36th Sikhs) ordered what there were of both regiments to fix bayonets and go straight at them, which they did, and found themselves the next moment in a collection of houses.

There was some close fighting in the dark, and

the village was cleared, and they determined to stay the night there. After being there some little time, three Afridis, evidently lying "perdu," suddenly sprang from the middle of them and darted off. Munn of the 36th pushed his sword through one and left it there (the sword being picked up this morning fifty yards away). Again, later, some of the enemy crept close up to them and fired a volley, killing poor little Lewarne of the 15th, wounding Munn, 36th Sikhs, in the hand, and killing and wounding some more.

Then they were left in peace for the rest of the night, and came in together this morning. They have missing some four or five men killed, as in the pitch darkness it was almost impossible to find a man when down. (All have been found, except one.) But all last night our anxiety was on account of 2nd company of the Dorsets, who were reported out. While out taking messages I ran across two of the Dorsets, who had just come in (8.30 p.m.), and they had a terrible story of how the two companies had been fallen upon by the enemy, and then while retiring they had tumbled down a nullah. He and his pal had lost touch of the remainder, and had come in by themselves. They also added that there had been "butchery."

Later, at about 10 p.m. I found another man coming in with no rifle, accoutrement, or boots. His story was muddled, but something to the same effect as the other two men. He said the enemy came on them, and that they were driven over the edge of a steep nullah with fixed bayonets and all landed at the bottom anyhow. Then they were set upon by Afridis. Two men came for him, and he called for help, and an officer came up and shot one of the Afridis, and in turn was shot himself. Then he was hit over the head with

something, remembers no more till he came to and found his rifle, etc., gone. He took off his boots and crept down the nullah, and seeing three Afridis, lay low till they went, and then came on into camp with his head badly hurt.

I had to go and tell Uncle W. all this when he was in bed, and, of course, it was most disturbing. However, nothing could be done, but early this morning three battalions and a battery went out to bring them in. The 15th and 36th didn't want bringing in, as they were all right, and in good spirits. They had a few of the Dorsets with them, who had been with them all night. But there were several Dorsets missing, and up to a couple of hours ago, when I went to the hospital to find out, ten men and one officer killed had been brought in, and eight wounded (these latter came in last night). One officer is still to be accounted for, and possibly more men. The bodies I saw were terribly mutilated. Up to the present there are sixty-nine casualties reported, including two officers of the Dorsets—oddly enough, both from other regiments: one of the 15th Sikhs, and one of 2nd Gurkhas (Wylie, the brother of the boy who died at Kohat when we were there, which will be a terrible blow to the father, Col. Wylie, who lived with us for a week there, and of whom I think I told you at the time). Col. Abbot, of 15th Sikhs, wounded, and two officers of 36th Sikhs. So it was a bad day; but, fortunately, not so bad as was thought last night, when it was imagined that two whole companies (weak though they are, twenty to thirty to a company) were adrift by themselves. It seems that our work isn't nearly over yet. The move to Bagh—three miles off—was postponed to-day, and the advance brigade goes there to-morrow, and we the next day. From there we pay a visit to Rajqul, a valley close by.



On the 27th, the day after the Orakzais have been given to come in with our terms, we move W. to the Chamkani country, and have a dig at them, going over the Lazaka (?) Pass to reach them, then back to Bahg, whence on the 3rd Dec. one division goes into the Bara Valley; one brigade comes back by this Maidan Valley into the Waran Valley, and thence into Bara; 1st Brigade from Mastura goes also into Bara, and then presumably we all meet, and very probably shall run into the Bara Column, as the C.-in-C. is keeping them till we get into the Bara Valley. After that we go to the Khyber, and so into Peshawar, when all our heavy baggage, which leaves us at Bagh on 26th, will meet us, having gone back to India *via* Kohat, etc.; so we shall travel cold and light once we leave Bagh next week. Apparently all connection with India by the way we came will be severed. This is all a secret here now, but will probably be stale news before it reaches you.

This has been a horribly gruesome letter, I fear, but I'll add one more detail which, if gruesome, was plucky. A man in the Dorsets, while surrounded with others of his regiment, having discharged his rifle, bayoneted one Afridi; then, his bayonet being broken, he clubbed the next, braining him, after which another snatched his rifle out of his hands, on which he picked up a rock and smashed in his head, and recovered his rifle and another one. He is now in hospital wounded, but doing well. This same man was recommended for the V.C. at Dargai. I'll stop now till later.

Old Sir Pertab Singh, of Jodpore, is now talking broken English like blazes. He is a dear little man, the best of sportsmen, and has seen out all the other rajahs who came up on this and

the other expeditions, all of whom have got tired of it and gone back to India. Sir Pertab, on the contrary, though he was through most of the Mohmund business, is no more tired of it than when he started, and when the Resident at Jhodpore wrote two days ago to Uncle W. to send him back, as he was badly wanted, he absolutely refused. And yet he lives in no luxury whatever ; and once we found him and his adopted son living practically from hand to mouth, buying food from anywhere he could get it, and it was by a mere accident we discovered this, for he had always told us he was all right. He is an oldish man, and raised the celebrated Jhodpore Lancers—all Merwars—concerning whom there was so much written in the papers a year ago, when the Viceroy was there . . .

The Tirah Expedition ended in December, 1897, and the Force was demobilised, Frank Maxwell rejoining his regiment at Peshawar, until he went on leave to England in March, 1898. On his return to India in January, 1899, he served with his regiment at Sialkot as squadron officer, and later as adjutant, until January, 1900, when he was ordered to proceed to South Africa with remounts from India. Having got to South Africa, he succeeded in finding employment with Roberts' Horse, and, as will be seen in the letters which follow, remained in South Africa until peace was signed in 1902.

## CHAPTER III

### SOUTH AFRICA

Koodoo's Drift,  
Modder River,  
Feb. 23rd, 1900.

MY DEAREST MOTHER—

. . . We, that is all available horses and men of cavalry, guns, and M.I., left Kimberley the day before yesterday (21st). Reveillé at 2.30 a.m. and ready to start at 5 a.m., but no rations having arrived we didn't get off till 6.30. Supposed to carry three days' rations for horses and men on the horses—an impossibility, of course. Travelled at a walk in three columns across the open veldt from 6.30 till 7 p.m., with two and a half hours' halt for water and feed at midday. Except guns in the distance, no signs of enemy.

Arrived in camp almost in dark. After watering had much difficulty in finding our place in it by 8.30 p.m., and sleep was quite welcome. Guns booming away south of us all night. Next morning off again at 6, thinking we had another twenty-eight to thirty miles' march to catch up French, but at 8.30 was pleasantly disappointed to find ourselves at this place with French and the remainder of all cavalry, etc., camped here. Most of Roberts' Horse are here also, and though in different parts of Camp at present, we all re-unite to-morrow. And now a word about this corps: About eight of the officers are in the service; one or two have been; remainder are either men from

home or colonials ; and all seem good fellows. Of the men, of course, I have only seen about 100, and a queer mixture of gentlemen, old soldiers, colonials, and rag-tag and bobtail they are. It's positively painful at present serving with them, for law and order is not a habit with them, as it is in the Service, and one is positively dumb with surprise at every turn at things that one sees and hears. However, that will wear off (the feeling of surprise, I mean), and the regiment has done very well up to date, I believe. . . .

We are on the open veldt with various kopjes all round, and eight miles off is Kitchener sitting very tight round Cronje, who is in the river bed. There was firing all last night, and for some hours this morning ; but it has ceased for some hours now, so perhaps there is truth in the rumour that we have sent in a flag of truce to Cronje. Roberts refused to accept surrender, unless it was unconditional ; but you'll have heard all this as soon, or probably much sooner, than we do a few miles off. We stood to the horses most of yesterday afternoon, as there were Boers from Colesberg knocking about, but none came near. This morning a number of cavalry and guns were out from camp, driving off another, or the same, lot trying to get to Cronje's help. Buller is said to be relieving Ladysmith to-day, as no troops are in front of him, so that should let old David \* loose, and Joubert free to come along to us, I hope. . . .

The Boer laager, or what battered remains there are of it, is just on the river bank. The Boers themselves in the river bed. Rivers out here have very deep beds, and don't flow nearly level with their banks as at home, and from anywhere, even from a hill ; the only indication one has of the Modder being a river is a long line of

\* Younger brother.

low trees and willows. It is about as unique a position, I imagine, as has ever been held, though it seems difficult for us to do him any harm, beyond smashing up his laager. But at night they can get out on to the plain and collar as many cattle as they choose, for our people are not within two miles of them. Our big guns fire into the river bed from various points on the right, but unless they plump bang into the bed no damage can be done; and even so, the Boers have dug themselves holes in the bank, and scuttle into them as soon as they see a gun fired in the distance.

The weather is vile, rain all night before last, and again last night, and heavy thunderstorm again to-day, so one is kept uncomfortably wet through. A good many of the fellows sleep in a hut hard by, but my squadron commander (I'm his second-in-command, with four other officers), Pack Beresford, R.H.A., is a strict soldier, and says we ought to do the same as the men; so out of doors in the rain we sleep, much scoffed at for our pains by all the others. . . .

You ought to see the clothes that are being worn. Some have no seat to their breeks, others with boots falling off their feet. We have to be up every morning, wet or fine, and ready saddled at 5 a.m.—absolute bunkum, of course, and straight out of the drill book—and it is much better being hungry asleep than hungry awake for two or three hours longer than necessary.

Koodoo's Drift,  
March 2nd, 1900.

MY DEAREST MOTHER—

. . . To go on from where I left off in my last, sent on the 26th. That night we were suddenly turned out—the whole of French's crowd practically—to draw a cordon round our end

of Cronje. So out we hurried, dinnerless, in the dark, and lay out all night, a long row of picquets fifty to a hundred yards apart, and several miles long. My job was one of a series of officers' patrols, who had to be out continuously pushing in front of the line of picquets, out towards the laager, to see that nobody was trying to get out. It was a very dark night, but nothing happened, and we came into camp at 7 a.m. Big shells were bursting in the river from Roberts' side till midnight.

About noon on the 27th we heard Cronje had surrendered with 4200 men, some guns, etc., and the camp was soon buzzing with cheers, as the news spread. Same evening again turned out hurriedly to spend a night on some kopje a few miles off, but arrived there we only stayed an hour, after seeing Boers playing about, and so leaving a battery we came home rejoicing.

Next day I rode in to the Boer position, which, as I told you in my last, is a most unique one. The river there is forty to fifty feet below the tops of its banks, and on the edge of the banks on each side were deep trenches—four feet—dug into chalk clay soil. In most places there was a double line of trenches, the second being sometimes out in front, sometimes a little way down the bank.

The laager was a mass of wrecked waggon, some blown to pieces, some burnt, and only the iron remaining. Many scores of poor dead horses; piles and piles of ammunition, shells, and saddles, cooking pots, clothes boxes, etc., all being sorted by our people. The Plain was extremely obnoxious in the matter of scent, as you may imagine. Our burst shells were lying in profusion everywhere. The Boers, besides their deep trenches, had dug deep into the banks, like rabbits, to escape from

shell fire. They admit nothing as regards their losses, but the live 4000 is a fairly good haul. They were all Transvaalers, except 1100 Orange Free State, and were marched off to the railway the same day. Cronje goes separately with Gen. Pretymann to Capetown. . . .

Bloemfontein,  
April 2nd, 1900.

MY DEAREST MOTHER—

. . . I sent you a wire this morning, just in case of accidents, for I know (in a small way) how anxious you are these days with five of us playing soldiers out here. One never knows how wires go home—sometimes they send no names, even of officers, with the first telegrams, lists of casualties, etc., and as my corps had a big list, I thought I'd make sure and save you a few hours' anxiety by saying I was all sound, and I hope it will have this effect, though it didn't go off till this morning, no telegrams being accepted yesterday, the messenger said.

Now I'll try and give you a brief account of things before the disaster \* (no other name, I'm afraid, as we lost guns) of March 31st, for my unsent letter will not see the light of England. We left here on the 18th, I think, with a couple of batteries R.H.A., the Household Cavalry, 10th Hussars, and about 700 Mounted Infantry under French. Marched about forty miles east in three pouring days and nights—hence slowness of march—and reached our destination, Thabanchu, on the 20th. This is a small town half-way between this and Ladybrand, and is surrounded by a great number of hills, and some proud enough to call

\* The affair at Korn Spruit or Sanna's Post, where Q Battery R.H.A. lost some guns. For his gallantry in this action, Frank Maxwell was awarded the Victoria Cross.

themselves "mountains." Our object was apparently to watch a large commando of Boers moving north from Colesberg way, and also to collect any arms from Orange Free State people who wanted to hand them in.

Our stay was only meant to be a short one, but for some reason we hung on and on, with disastrous results, and I believe our staying was an accident originally. Anyhow, an advance party under Pilcher\* half-way between Thabanchu and Ladybrand saw very large numbers of Boers daily, and one day he, with a few men, rode into Ladybrand and collared the Landrost, returning with him at full gallop, and getting away with a narrow shave. This stirred up the ant-heap, which previously was fairly quiet. Pilcher had hurriedly to leave his position twenty-five miles in advance of us, and marching at night, reached us on the morning of the 29th, reporting Boers in great numbers behind him. Out then should our little force have cleared from Thabanchu and made tracks for Bloemfontein. But we didn't. French had gone back some days before, and Broadwood, 12th Lancers, commanded, and I suppose, without orders, did not like to clear.

However, early next morning, the 30th, our regiment's picquets came into contact with the enemy, and at midday all of us were ordered out to stand by, while the transport was parked three miles back. The Boers meaning business, the transport was ordered back to Modder River, some sixteen miles back (which they reached at 9 p.m. about), while we lay fooling about till 9 a.m., when the last of our picquets were allowed to come in, and then the force retired all that night, reaching the transport on Bloemfontein side of Modder at 4.30 a.m. next morning.

\* Major-Gen. T. D. Pilcher, C.B.

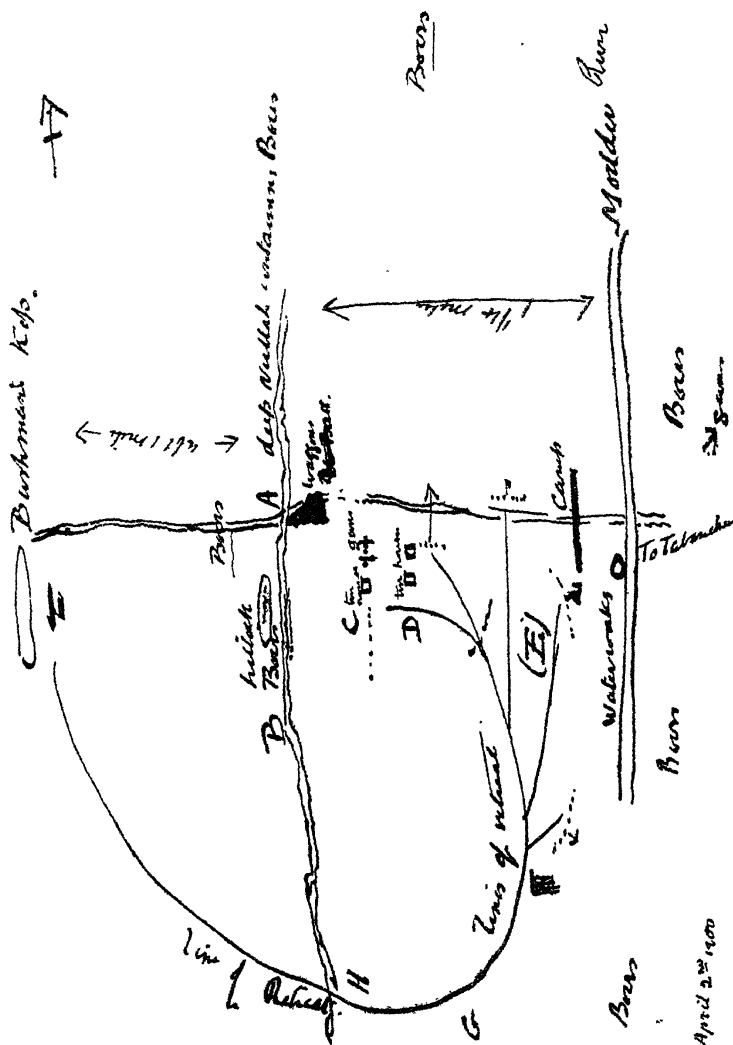


Then occurred the next grave mistake (in my humble opinion, which I was bold enough to hold at the time, so it's not wisdom after the event). Knowing the Boers would be hot on us, the waggons were not ordered back again towards Bloemfontein at daybreak, and at 6.30 there was musketry firing on the Thabanchu side of river from the Boers. Nor did this stir the responsible people, and watching with my field-glasses—naked eye was good enough—I could see the enemy's guns coming quietly up. The first gun opened at about 7 a.m., and not till then did our people begin to realise the situation. No order was necessary then to inspan the waggons. The 4-inch or 5-inch shell dropped in amongst them, and that was order enough, for every mule was in in no time, and a real Hades of shouting and yelling of black boys urged them pell-mell to the rear. Our guns did not reply.

And now comes the next point, which shows another great error—pardonable, I suppose—as the existence of obstacle was probably forgotten. About a mile back . . . (Had to stop yesterday, and will try and get on with this a little now, but being adjutant now, don't have every moment to myself.) Well, about a mile back was another stream, pretty deep, and with a difficult road down and up it for waggons. I'll draw you a sketch on separate paper, so that you can grasp a little what happened, and the ingenious and successful trap laid for us.

All the transport galloped from camp to A, and got crowded into a wedge-shape, trying to cross the one road. The Boer guns were a long way off, below the sketch, across the Modder, but dropped shell pretty thick into everything up to about half-way between camp and A, hence the continued hurry from camp to A of the waggons.

Our guns, two batteries, were put under our escort; one battery, Q, was in rear of the tail of



the waggons; the other, U, got on the other side of the mass from us. As the guns went back, so

did we, the other mounted infantry regiments standing fast, more or less, near and about the camp. My squadron was leading, *i.e.* nearest A, and when about a quarter of a mile from the stream, an excited man galloped up and said the Boers were right in the waggons disarming our men (every waggon had two or three men with it). I at once galloped out with an advance guard—what had happened to the real advance guard of the column, I don't know; probably it had never been ordered—and leaving it to go straight on towards the stream, I galloped up to the waggons, and sure enough, without the smallest noise or confusion, were Boers, thick as peas, collecting arms from our men. There was no mistake, for I almost rode one swine over, and instinctively felt for my revolver to shoot him; but these days one doesn't carry such things, and on this occasion, perhaps, it was as well.

Back I went, full split to the regiment, which had then trotted up to within 120 yards of the stream, and were about 200 yards from the line of waggons. I told the colonel, and at the same moment, standing up on the bank of the stream, a Boer, with others by him, shouted to us to "go to the waggons." The hillock we could then see was full of Boers, who made themselves shown. (The guns of Q Battery were at this time, I think, to our right rear.) Only then did we fully realise the trap, and the second-in-command, Beresford, sang out, "Files about," the colonel shouting ditto. The very moment we turned came the storm. Men and horses on the grass in a second, and there's no denying it, there was plenty of hurry in the retirement—full gallop for most, I think.

Don't think me a bragging ass, and trying to make myself out a brave man, but I honestly tell you I was so completely taken by surprise at the

whole thing, and most of all at our going files about—which, undoubtedly, was quite the right and only thing to do—that I didn't hurry back, more fool I, and I think I was clear enough in my head to see that the chief storm on us was from the stream and hillock, and on the poor gunners from the waggons. My orderly stayed with me like a brick, and yet while we still went slow and gave a dismounted man a hand, he stuck by me, and refused to gallop off, as I ordered him. It never occurred to me personally that I was going to get out of the show, and I just didn't care a rap—at which I'm entirely surprised now; but I remember the feeling so perfectly that I know my imagination isn't going astray.

From where we were fired on first to C, the first tin hut, was perhaps 400 yards, and arrived here we turned in, three of us, for shelter. Here there were half a dozen wounded or dismounted men already. At D, the next tin barn, there were several gun horses, gunners, a few of our men, and some other people, who, I think, had only got so far when the firing opened. As I arrived at C, the battery, or what remained of it, commenced to open fire. There were only five guns out of the six. Of these only three were being worked, and very soon only two, for in such a hail the gunners went down like flies. Never was anything more magnificent than the way these men fought. I wasn't thirty yards off and level with them safe and sound behind the tin hut, and for very shame once an Australian (I think he was) and I ran out to help the colonel commanding the two batteries—the other battery wasn't there—to drag a limber up to one of the guns, so as to have the ammunition nearer. He thanked us as if in Pall Mall, and said he didn't require our help any more, and we skunked back to our shelter, the Australian

getting badly wounded *en route*, poor chap. The colonel was wounded too soon after. All three subalterns were—leaving only the major and the captain of the battery, and about three men per gun. They were still fighting them when I summoned up sufficient courage (I didn't know till then how hard it was to leave cover) to ride out over the ground between C, camp, and E, to try and find my squadron.

I wandered about, and not finding my own squadron among the rest, thought they must be at the second tin house D, which I had passed without stopping on the way down, so I went back there. I found none there, except a couple of the officers looking after several wounded, including Beresford, second-in-command, who was shot almost as soon as we "filed about," but managed to stick to his horse till he reached this shelter.

Meanwhile, the cavalry (Household and 10th Hussars) had sloped away by the "line of retreat," as I've marked on sketch. We had time to look at them, and saw them moving very slowly round, halting several times. As it appeared to be our only chance, their moving round quickly to "Bushman's Koppie," and then making a demonstration behind the Boers, this slow movement was somewhat discouraging, and the last I saw of them was *halted* under the foot of Bushman's Koppie. Anyway, they gave us no aid whatever; cavalry seem to have quite lost any dash or enterprise—if they have had any this war, except during French's ride on Kimberley. They had some losses, I hear, but these must have been, we imagine, their men with their wagons.

When I got back to D tin house, gunners' horses, most of them wounded, were crowding about on the left side of it, and gunners (or drivers)

too. The order had come two or three times for the guns to retire, and as many times the major (Phipps Hornby, who, with his captain, bore a charmed life) sent back to say he couldn't get away. As often as horses under plucky drivers went out, so often were the horses shot. Four guns and limbers were hauled back from C (look at the sketch) by officers and one or two gunners to such shelter as D tin house could afford. Here horses were put in (about two only, instead of eight, the teams for R.H.A. out here) and galloped off. The 5-inch gun couldn't be got out, as there seemed such a beastly hurry to retire. It could have been got out, had they not bothered to send out horses. These were shot dead practically when they were hooked in, so it would have taken a long time, and been very difficult, to have cut them clear, got the gun and limber separate again (the others, of course, had been wheeled out separately), and then hauled them in across the 100-150 yards. So it had to be left. The sixth gun—I don't know where it was, somewhere right forward, I suppose.

There were five guns of the two batteries saved, but the fifth belonged to U. Battery, who, as I have said, were on the far side of the wedge of waggons, and were all captured immediately, except the one gun, of which the drivers were all shot, and the horses stampeded—I suppose to the rear. Anyway, it got clear. So Q—our battery—lost two guns and saved four. The guns having gone, the people facing F, and at camp, began to retire, so the few of our men and other corps (mixed up) firing from the left of tin house C, and at tin house D (. . . . . on sketch) ran for it. Most of the men from our part were dismounted, their horses having been killed, or bolted, so we didn't get along very fast. I was lucky with my

jolly little (huge out here) horse, so hadn't to foot it. I doubt whether I could have, being dead beat with the exertion of previous two or three hours, only having been got off my back the day before by the "exigencies of war" from six days' dysentery.

At first it looked as if the retirement was going to be bad, but when the various bodies from the various directions had more or less got on to the main line of retreat, it was done grandly. It wasn't a case for generals—hanged if I even saw one all day—but squadron or company commanders handled their men tip top. Left last, you held on till somebody in rear had dismounted and ready to open fire—and back you streaked. Mind, it wasn't one corps. There were two mounted infantry regiments (each about 200 strong—each made up of a company from three or four infantry regiments, about seventy of the New Zealand contingent, who were simply *grand*, three companies of "Burmese mounted infantry" on Burmese ponies, and composed of men from three regiments in Burma, and ourselves)—five corps in all; and yet this might have been one, so well did all work together. Perhaps the mounted infantry regiments made a mistake in making their retirement at a *walk* mostly—in fact, it was a great mistake, and I'm afraid caused loss of life to others who had to hold on to cover them much longer than would have been the case had they made proper use of the speed horses give one. The Boers were now pressing very hard, galloping like steam as each last lot retired and opening fire. They came on in very great numbers from (F) round to the left-hand bottom corner of the paper. Fortunately not from A (we learnt afterwards why). So bold they got, that the 5th Fusilier Company in one of the

mounted infantry regiments were badly handled by them, three out of four officers being killed or wounded. The fourth told me this afternoon they (the 5th) stayed too long, and the Boers galloped up and fired point blank at them *off* their horses.

Well, back we got to H, and after then were free of 'em, though not their bullets, and we all massed quietly under Bushman's Koppie, and had a roll call. Our casualties killed, wounded, and missing, amounted to ninety-four (since reduced to eighty-six by men turning up), out of about 270 that marched from Thabanchu. This included nine officers: one killed, two wounded, brought back with us, three left in tin hut, and three missing. Both my horses were shot, one only a graze—the other, my orderly's, severely in the quarter (received at the stream), and my orderly wounded in the finger. I left him behind when I went back to the tin houses to save the little horse, who was losing much blood—and very sick was Dost Mahomed at not being allowed to come.

At Bushman's Koppie we heard that a division of infantry was at hand from Bloemfontein—sent out at 2 a.m. that morning, on account of Broadwood's report the day before of the enemy being in such strength at Thabanchu. Broadwood had also sent back a galloper on the first knowledge of the trap, and I think he met Martyr's brigade of mounted infantry pretty near Bushman's Koppie. Anyway, though they were there early in the engagement, there is much heart-burning in their brigade, that they apparently made no effort to come down towards A and get at the Boer rear. This may be wrong, of course, for movements away from one's own sphere of action are hard to follow. Still, it's never been contradicted yet that Martyr *was* there at Bushman's Koppie, and



stayed there. However, indirectly it helped us, for the Boers knew they were there, and hence did not attempt to cut in from A to H, or did so in a very half-hearted way. Still, had we but known, we could have held on and saved our last gun, and perhaps more.

Rumour gave the numbers of the Boers against us as so enormous that perhaps this was impracticable, and this is partly borne out by the fact that the whole division of infantry with their batteries failed to get as far as A, which shows that the stream must have held a very big force—of course, reinforced from all sides later.

Well, at 3 p.m. we began our eighteen mile march back to Bloemfontein (the division staying out, of course). It was a weary long march, as we had had no bite since noon the previous day, and to make things a little worse, being pitch dark and no moon, whoever was leading us lost his way, and we had to retrace our steps a long distance, reaching our goal—the Comt. camp outside Bloemfontein—at about 11.15 p.m. Here, after much delay, we got some bully beef and bread, but most of the men were off the saddle and asleep long before it was issued.

It was a bad business—in fact, as bad as it could be. If we hadn't lost guns, it wouldn't have mattered twopence, and in fact been almost an enjoyable business holding our own against such a number of hogs. But the loss of the guns is heartbreaking. Q Battery (ours) had fifty-two casualties, I hear, and they could have had but few horses left. Haven't yet heard how U came off in the casualty line—all taken prisoners or killed, I believe—but out in this hole one can get no news, and I can't find a moment to go in to Bloemfontein.

The division, failing to get any forrarder with

the Boers, have been recalled back to B.—I don't think on this account. Anyhow, the Boers have possession still of the waterworks out there (which supply B. twenty-two miles off), and the supply is now cut off.

Last night we were roused from slumber by an urgent note, saying Boers were working round from their south, and ordering us to be on the alert for them ; so saddle up in pitch darkness at 4.30 a.m.—of course, no Boers—but we have an alarmist Johnnie in charge down here. However, Boers are apparently collecting in force all about here, and I only hope they try and knock their ugly heads against us. We (our brigade) bar their only entrance to B., and I hope we may have a chance of getting even with them—though we give them full credit for a most masterly-laid trap on the 31st.

Four of our wounded officers have been brought in to Bloemfontein and all doing well, and Beresford, second-in-command, is going to live all right, in spite of a hole through his lungs.

I have now been made adjutant, and it's a bit too much of a good thing to be this in an irregular corps, especially at a time like this, with endless casualty returns, mad but futile attempts to get a little kit for men, and endless worries about picquets all day.

Elysium, about 27 miles  
South of Vaal River,  
May 25th, 1900.

DEAREST MOTHER—

. . . Camp at night is a strange medley of noises. Usually one doesn't hear much of it, as one is tired enough to go to sleep and stay asleep. However, last night I was roused about six times for brigade orders, which have a knack of constantly changing at any and all times of the night.

Oxen are tremendous talkers of nights, and low and low till they seem to get hoarse. Mules, too, especially on underfed days, bray all night. Horses don't say much, but when several mares are daily commandeered to mount men whose horses are beat or exhausted, there are generally a number of foals. The poor little beggars tramp along behind on the line of march till they are tired, and then dropping behind often arrive in camp late, called there by the whinnies of their mummies. In camp again they get lost, so all night one hears the infant's shrill neigh, answered by those of fond mother's deeper-toned whinnies. They get separated before long, poor little things, but most of them are old enough to pick up a living on the veldt, or get in with other mares and get nourishment from them; but it makes one feel awfully sorry for the little beggars, trying to keep up on a long day's march.

27th, *Transvaal*.—Here we jolly well are, squatting in the promised land and facing a big position held by Boers. When I left off two days ago I was a bit premature. We sat tight from 6.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., expecting to move any moment, and waiting for a convoy to give us food. Convoy didn't come, of course, and it wouldn't be a convoy if it did. So we trekked again about eight miles, reaching camp at night, and still this side of the Vaal.

28th.—Yesterday we shoved on sixteen or seventeen miles, which was a great strain on the poor transport animals, which are done beat and have had no food for three days. Our horses (ponies?) are about as bad, the commissariat having given us exactly 2 lbs. of oats in the last five days. We have just managed to keep them going by making for any mealie field (mealies are Indian corn) and peeling them off the stalks.

They, poor beasties, are almost as badly off as the mules, for they generally go twice, if not more, the distance the transport and infantry march, and there's hardly one of the little fourteen-hand rats that doesn't carry seventeen or eighteen stone. That's the *one* advantage of being an infantry man—you have only your own stomach to think of, and nothing but your own fat feelings to sympathise for. My little horse (huge out here) is doing grandly, and is round and plump as anything; but I generally manage to have some corn up my sleeve for him, and it's a very rainy day if he doesn't get more than most. . . .

About 30 miles S.E.  
of Pretoria,

June 14th, 1900.

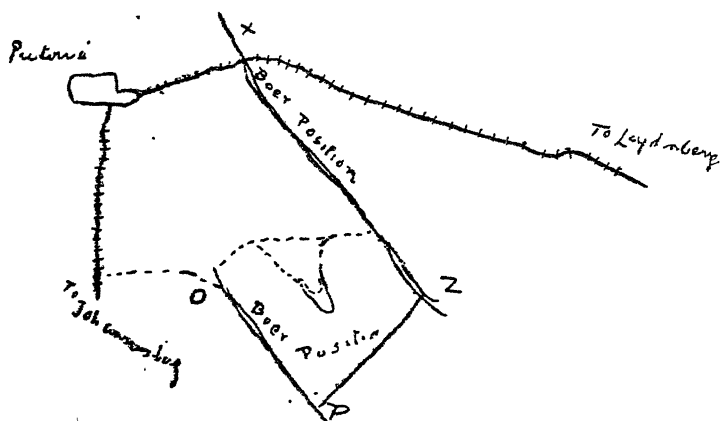
MY DEAREST MOTHER—

As we seem to be going to have a long day of it, sitting on a koppie, I will begin a letter. I wrote last, I think, from Irene, or near it. From there we marched about twelve miles and halted.

The next day, 11th, we stayed in camp, an armistice being proclaimed. However, we heard of it too late, or there was some mistake, and we sent out foraging parties, with the result that there was very little armistice about it for several hours. Botha, we learnt, had been invited to a conference, and to hear the terms Bobs offered—which are liberal enough. However, it is said the polite Botha returned an answer to the effect that he hadn't asked for a conference, nor did he want one. So the matter of an armistice dropped, and hopes for immediate peace were ended.

Next day we went on, the infantry staying behind, and two cavalry brigades and four mounted infantry corps going on, with the object, it is said, of getting through or behind Botha's position,

and cutting the railway behind him. His position, we knew, lay across the railway like this :—



Or, rather, I should say (as I have completed the rough map), we knew he occupied the range of hills from X to Z. What we didn't know was that he held a parallel one from OP and continued it across to Z. The dotted line shows about our route. We were to have gone more or less straight across, but arrived somewhere near opposite the place we meant to get through, between XZ. We came under heavy artillery fire. So off we rattled towards PZ line. Heavily cannonaded there, and immediately again from the OP side.

So here we were in a horsehoe, with only the heels, or end of it, empty of the enemy. Then began almost the most unpleasant day most of us have spent. Our poor little horse artillery pop-guns (two batteries) were, of course, nowhere against the Boer artillery. Our twelve-pounders range well at 2500, and *can* fire up to 5000, they say. The Boer guns, on the other hand, don't need to come into action for anything under 5000,

and can make things very lively at 8000. They made things hot for us, first one side, and then, as we tried to clear to the other, bang came shells from there, and so on. In addition, they had a number of riflemen in mealie fields, which were strewn over the middle of the ground.

The Household Cavalry and 12th Lancers were ordered to clear the ground, which they did, with the loss of Lord Airlie and four or five officers in the 12th, and one or two in the Household Cavalry. Then they sought cover under a koppie, and in a kraal, and our corps supported at about 10 a.m., we got settled into our various places—more or less as each thought best to help one another and get some cover from the rifle and shell fire, for the two parallel lines were high ridges, and the one that joined them was also high ground, so we were practically commanded from three sides.

From 10 a.m. till dark we had to stick it, and most uncomfortable it was, and one has to use the well-worn expression that the "fire was tremendously heavy, but very few casualties." Shell fire really means more to the nerves than to the body, however bad it is. . . .

Pack Beresford, just rejoined from his Sanna's Post wound, very nearly retired permanently with myself at an early stage of the proceedings, for a small shell surprised us by bursting exactly between us. It touched neither of us, but a splinter hit a mare some way off, and another dashed backwards and cut my horse's head rope in two and made two nasty gashes in his neck. My orderly, at my elbow, must have had a narrow shave, as he was holding the head rope, but as usual was quite unconcerned, except at the wounds on the horse, which he is very fond of. However, for all his care of him (he always tried to manœuvre his

horse—a Cape one—into a position that covered mine), the poor dear was hit twice again, but luckily one only a long, but skin-deep cut from a shell splinter, and the other a bullet at almost the only place one couldn't have hurt him—the very bottom of his hoof, though it made him jump more than any other. So counting the one he got at Sanna's Post—a slight one—he has been very unlucky, though, considering he is still alive, very lucky also.

Well, this sort of beastliness went on till 5 o'clock, and we were glad to be able to stand up without much fear of our heads being chipped off. Then began a long cold night, foodless and blanketless, though most of us had one blanket . . . .

The Boer army, or a large part of it, camped within eight miles of us last night. Where they are now I don't know, as I have been busy sleeping all day, and so haven't heard what the patrols have discovered. It is not known what we are to do, go on or go back; but we shall soon know, I suppose, as it is late now. . . .

Vredefort,  
July 25th, 1900.

MY DEAREST MOTHER—

. . . Yes, Dost Mahomed is a very fine fellow. I only discovered yesterday how nearly he must have been caught or killed at Sanna's Post. I was asking him what he would do if I was taken prisoner, to which he replied: "You wouldn't be, in the first place, and in the second place, if you were, I'd come along too" (with a "How would you get along without me?" tone). He then told me that at Sanna's Post, when I had left him in a place of comparative security with a squadron (his horse being wounded, and I

not being particularly anxious that *he* should be), he had stayed there waiting for me till the "Dutch log" were within forty yards of him, and that then only, not seeing me or any other sahib, he hooked it. When I left him I went off to play about elsewhere, and after the guns had gone, those of us who covered them cleared back pretty quickly by a direct route, the squadron with which I had left D. M. having gone back some time before. And yet the good fellow stuck there all by himself, thinking that would be my line of retirement, and seeing everybody all round him going back. I'm afraid I was too busy to think of him, but if I had done so I should have been quite sure he would have retired along with the squadron with which I had left him. He is good stuff, isn't he? . . .

Our cavalry forget that they must tackle the Boers with their own weapon these days, and that he isn't an enemy to be caught at the point of a lance or sword. On their horses, unfortunately, they are just as bad, for they will never move out of a walk, and always come to a standstill when fired at. One can only suppose it is the rotten training the officers have. Take the difference between their scouting from Bethlehem to the Railway, when they completely lost touch of De Wet, in spite of being twice engaged with him during the march, and that of Wigram of Kitchener's Horse (he belongs to my regiment). Wigram, two days ago, at the Railway was simply told that De Wet had crossed the line, and was somewhere south of us—find him. He went out with a patrol, found them; got between their baggage and rearguard; counted their waggons, took a prisoner, and returned at night, leaving two of his men to stick to the Boers till next morning. Nothing very great, but how very



much more than has ever been done by the sister service. And the pity of it is that the material is grand, but isn't worked on. A gunner was talking to me just now, and said: "I'd rather have 500 mounted infantry than 2000 cavalry," and I'm afraid this is the general sentiment. . . .

So *au revoir* for a few days. I don't think I could have half thanked you all for the letters. Nothing in English can give you an idea what a feast they were. . . .

Elands River,  
August 17th, 1900.

De Wet is still at large, though we presume Hamilton is after him. He is a wonderful man. How he managed to escape us is extraordinary. Some fifty prisoners escaped from him four days ago, and one of ours—a very smart fellow—told us his oxen were absolutely cooked and could hardly move, and that Methuen's lot were continually on their heels, but couldn't press home because of his weakness in numbers. The prisoners escaped by the confusion resulting on some of Methuen's shells bursting in the waggons. De Wet must have been trekking at the rate of nearly thirty miles a day, and fast, too, and always harassed by one force or another of us, and yet this wonderful fellow managed to clear away, losing only one gun and fourteen waggons to Methuen (out of some 300 waggons), while we, with mostly mule waggons, had to leave them behind hopelessly tired out. Nor did we see a single dead ox on the road. Ask our oxen to do twenty miles a day, and they are dead beat in three days.

Of course, we *ought* to have caught him all right; but as long as we have generals who make

their cavalry and mounted infantry walk all day, and take from morning to night to come twenty or thirty miles, so long will Boers have the better of us. The only practical part of peace training, *i.e.* getting one's horses fit, and calculating how far and fast they can go without killing them, is hopelessly forgotten out here. We rarely, if ever, trot, but walk, walk, walk, the livelong day. It tires the men, and consequently tires the horses. By trotting, walking, leading, and halting, one can cover five miles an hour with ease, thus getting to your destination or enemy quicker; and if it be destination, the horses can be off-saddled perhaps many hours earlier, and graze and rest. As it is, we practically never halt, except in a spasmodic sort of way, when the cavalry are alarmed by some shots by snipers. We dawdle along all the day, and consequently the horses get leg weary and have no time to graze; and (a very large AND) we don't catch up our enemy—which boils down to the sad, sad fact that British cavalry cannot give Boer oxen a twenty minutes' start in 100, and catch them. . . . There seems an awful fear nowadays among our leaders of committing themselves to any kind of risk.

Everybody is sick of these miserable tactics and their result. I hate it all, and wish I was an infantry soldier, for, like many others of my kidney, both in British and Native cavalry, I'm ashamed of our cavalry leaders.

The last few days we have been passing farms with lovely orange groves, thickly laden with fruit; and—there aren't many oranges in any of them now. This is a fairly rich country here too, the farms being well stocked, which is just as well, or the horses would fare badly. We are on the road by which Jameson's raiders came along, and yesterday passed by the store of a Jew who gave

him away. If this is disjointed, pardons many. A day of halting is not altogether one of rest, as I have often told you. It's a rest from travelling, but every other thing dodges into one's leisure and I have been all day writing this much. . . .

19th, Sunday, Rustenburg.—Marched yesterday from our last place, and were by way of going to Pretoria. Left at 4.30 a.m. and crossed a bad Pass, and met Methuen's Column coming our way. He goes to Zeerust to rescue (probably) Carrington. Methuen's Brigade is called the Salvation Army, as it is always being dodged about saving somebody.

We arrived opposite another Pass last night, and this morning expected to have to fight for it. However, it wasn't held, and we came along in here by midday. It's a lovely little place, and flowers grow like they do in England.

Mahon with the I.L.H. only left here two days ago, and we are camped almost on the ground that David and Pat slept on two nights ago. We hoped to halt for the rest of the day here, and every man was washing and shaving in the real live brook; but we have orders to march at 5 p.m., and are to travel (or try to) forty miles to-night to Commando Nek. Suppose there is something up, but am growing rather sceptical nowadays. . . .

Must stop now and have some grub, as we streak in an hour. We were going to have a little Dutch boy and girl to tea with us this afternoon, but that's off. We are camped against the grandmamma's house, and so made the kids' acquaintance. Conversation without an interpreter would have been difficult, but ration jam and biscuits would have helped it along somehow. I must give them the pot of jam, though (we made a haul of this commodity from Hoare's laager,

in which several cases of jam and contents were scattered by shell).

*Au revoir*, probably till Pretoria. . . .

Cape Town,  
October 17th, 1900.

MY DEAREST MOTHER—

. . . My telegram, I'm just sending off, will surprise you rather. As I left Bobs' house with the mails K. of K. called me, and asked me to be his A.D.C. Why or wherefore I don't know, as we ain't acquainted. However, point-blanked like this, I had to say "Yes." Wish he had seen his way to ask me a little sooner, and so saved me a five days' journey down here, and five days' back. My horses are here and everything; but if the ship that sails to-morrow can take 'em, I'll send 'em by it. I imagine K. will be out here for two or three months yet. I feel it's low down and beastly altogether on my regiment, but what can I do? Everybody is nagging me to stick to it. Bobs said good-bye to me in his usual matchless manner.

Best love to you all. Mail just off.

Yours,  
FRANK.

Commander-in-Chief's Office,  
South Africa,  
Pretoria,  
December 14th, 1900.

MY DEAR FATHER—

. . . K. seems to have pretty well knocked De Wet's scheme of entering the Colony on the head—for the present, anyway. He has now, with his usual tactics, split up into several parties, and is being hunted north, east, and west,

jinking about like the best of pig. No doubt he has a concentration in view somewhere.

Our other success is killing Lemmer, the moving spirit on the Kimberley side of operations—which has been looking up a bit lately, and getting rather too lively. Against this, we have to put a pretty hard knock suffered by Clements, some forty miles from here yesterday, when he was attacked by a large force of 2500 under Delarey and another. We don't know much about it yet, except that he has had very heavy casualties, including four officers killed and a large number wounded. Four companies of North-umberland Fusiliers, belonging to, but detached from, his force, are supposed to have been taken, though as yet no news of them has come.

Clements was retreating last night, and asking for reinforcements, which K. sent him with his usual quickness, long before he had Clements' urgent message for them.

I think it must have been "raining" somewhere, because it certainly "poured" yesterday, for down by Rouxville 150 of Brabant's Horse were killed, wounded, or taken—probably mostly the latter, as this corps has been recently recruited, and I know had nearly 75 per cent. of the regiment raw men. Hang this wretched surrendering, though I suppose sitting in an armchair it is easy enough to be brave; but it does seem to happen a bit often, doesn't it? . . .

Pretoria,  
January 2nd, 1901.

MY DEAREST MOTHER—

. . . I think there is always far too much secrecy on all Staffs. If there is a disaster, the Army is left to find out through the papers (which in the field, of course, they never get); and the

papers get it usually *via* England, which receives it through the War Office telegram, and send either daily or when necessary. Consequently, the Army hears rumours of a disaster and magnifies it enormously.

The same here in Pretoria—extraordinary rumours fly about, bucking up some (disloyal), depressing others. Everybody on the Staff seems to think it his duty to hold his tongue about a reverse, while they wag them extensively when we are in luck. By this much more harm than good is done. It all comes out in the papers nine or ten days later. Being an irresponsible person, and having gone through nine months of being kept totally in the dark concerning everything, I make it my business to tell all and sundry the exact details, good or bad, who choose to ask. I hate all this sort of hereditary humbug that goes on on all Staffs. Hundreds of things, of course, want secrecy, but a great many also are good to air—bad things want air and light as well as good, don't you think?

Commander-in-Chief's Office,  
South Africa,  
Pretoria,  
February 22nd, 1901.

MY DEAREST MOTHER—

Our return journey from De Aar was more exciting than most of our travels. We ran up without mishap to within some twenty miles of Johannesburg, being rather lucky at that, considering that we ran all night with Boers playing about near the line. On Monday morning, however, at about 6.30 a.m. we were panting up a long and steep incline, and our pilot engine some five minutes ahead was pushing a goods train in front of us, when about a couple of miles from the

top we heard firing, and what afterwards proved to be an explosion. An excited patrol galloped up, and told us there were Boers just in front, so with much presence of mind we reversed and steamed five or six miles back to the last station, closely followed by our pilot, which being fortunately uncoupled from the goods train it was lending a hand to, was able to cast off and get away. From it we learnt the goods train (which was round a sharp bend and so hidden from us) had exploded a mine and been wrecked, a pretty big number of Boers immediately rushing down upon it.

Dropping our train with K., etc., at the station, we detached one of the partially armoured escort trucks, put all the escort, sixty men, into it, and in two minutes were plugging away up the hill again. I went on the engine and found the ordinary complement of driver and mate supplemented by two lion-hearts in the railway business from the station, who doubtless wished to see the fun. We were moving before I discovered these, or should have turned 'em off. However, they were all full of bravery, the driver handling a small winch, and saying proudly that that was all the arms he had, but reckoned it was enough for Boers!

Up we steamed round and round the corners, till we got in sight of our friends in front, who opened fire. I stopped for a minute to drop the youthful officer and a dozen men to keep the line open behind us while we shoved on a bit nearer. Getting to within about 2000 yards of the wrecked train, and going slow, a pom-pom from a big koppie some 2500 yards on our right opened on us. And when the pom-poms came, our brave friends' (on engine) bravery went, and turning the crank, or whatever it is called, to reverse the

engine, the driver with his three friends hopped nimbly out to the plate that runs along outside the boiler—on the far side—and there sat shivering with funk. As we hadn't come all the way up just to go back again, it was slightly annoying, and my attempts at manipulating the crank being a failure, I had to drag the driver in and make him turn it on. However, just as he was doing so, a pom-pom burst at the step, and covering him with mud, took his heart of grace out of him again. However, seeing we should have the engine wrecked if we didn't get it away, I ordered the men out of the truck. Having to get out of the engine to do this, the swab as soon as my back was turned reversed again, so I had to dodge backwards and forwards from engine to truck, threatening the engine-driver with instant slaughter and exhorting the clumsy Tommies to hurry their movements on getting out of the clumsy truck. They tumbled out somehow, most of 'em landing on their heads instead of their feet, and then engine and truck, much relieved, sailed hurriedly downhill again.

Firing was fairly heavy by now, though the pom-pom was evidently not too well supplied with ammunition, and gave us very few of its pills after the engine departed. I sent most of the men up a deepish cutting along the line, and with a dozen or so went for a koppie close to and overlooking the wrecked train, and got it with the loss of one poor fellow killed—shot through the stomach. The Boers weren't for fighting, fortunately, and cleared rapidly. I doubt if they would have, had they known how few of us there were.

On reaching the train, we found they had done their exploding work well. The engine lying topsy turvy down the small embankment,



and much battered by the explosion—some of its plates being blown 200 yards away. The tender looked hard at work, trying to climb on to the engine's back; guard's van and two other trucks lying in a hopeless mess on the other side of embankment. The crater caused by the explosion was six or seven feet deep and wide. The engine-driver we found terribly scalded, not one rag of skin from top to toe on him. The skin of his hands lying near him complete, like gloves, with the nails at the end of them. I think he was too bad to feel much pain, moaning all the time that he was "so cold;" but in spite of this, the plucky fellow enquired after his mate, who luckily got off without a scratch. We did what we could for the poor man, but he died very soon.

The Boers had taken five or six Tommies that were on the train, and these bootless and coatless shortly appeared on the scene. They hadn't much to say; the explosion had taken place, and instantly 400-500 were on the train, which they proceeded to loot, hanging what they could on to their saddles round their horses' necks, and filling half a dozen carts with the spoil. They had had between half to three-quarters of an hour at the train before we drove them off, and hadn't done much damage, considering their numbers and the time they had had.

About an hour later, after we had separated a burning truck from the rest, an armoured train from Johannesburg fetched up and dropped a shell over the men I had placed some distance away. These stoopids ran like hares, of course, thus making the train think they were Boers, with the inevitable result that several more shells came fizzing at us. However, by vigorous waving of my hat, the armoured train was induced to cease firing, and came along to shake hands.

Borrowing a pony, I rode back to the station, and we steamed up to the wreck, and then getting into the armoured train, ran back to next station towards Johannesburg, and changing again, reached Pretoria at 3 p.m. instead of 8 a.m. It was really great luck our being behind the goods train, for had we not been, the Boers would have looted the whole of it and made a rare haul of food and stuff and saddles. The station below couldn't spare any men, as they had a bridge to guard. They sent out a dozen mounted infantry to a koppie some five miles from us, and succeeded in getting three men wounded—I think they would have been more useful with my lot.

It was real jolly getting on to the veldt again, and almost a pleasure to hear the pom-pom and Mauser pop-pop again after four months' silence. With the makings of almost a decent little fight in the morning, and a *hot tub* two hours after in a house, what could one want more; it's not often the two go together!

Chesham (Master of the Buckhounds) is the head of the Yeomanry out here, and frequently comes to stay from Johannesburg. One would go a very long way to find a nicer fellow than he. He has asked me to hunt with him at home, promising me a mount—an offer that is a bit too good ever to become practicable to accept, I'm afraid. . . .

Middleburg,  
February 27th, 1901.

MY DEAREST MOTHER—

. . . Mrs Botha having brought a letter from Louis last week, in which he said he would like to meet Lord K., we lost little time over the business, and left next morning, although there would be little chance of L. Botha being able to

get here till a good deal later. But K. wisely took Botha's advice, in part if not in whole. B. advised his coming by road, not by rail. But K., forestalling the philanthropic designs of the Boers, started before any rumour of his going could get about, and so we arrived here without any fireworks. Hence the perhaps apparently rather undignified earliness of arrival, looking as if the C.-in-C. were over-keen to meet the Comdt. General—a fact very easily and always misconstrued by the Boers, who are like natives for the avidity to see weakness in anything.

Arrived here, a letter was sent from our outposts to a Boer laager seven or eight miles away. That was on Saturday night; to-day, Wednesday, a letter has just come from Botha to say he will be here to-morrow morning. K., with his usual impatience, was beginning to fidget, but is now quiet again. I'll not close this till to-morrow, so as to tell you anything about him there may be to relate. If he wishes it, we put him up; but I fancy he will come and go the same day. It is too much to hope that anything will come of the meeting; but still it might, and won't do much harm any way.

To-day is Majuba Day: how time flies. This day last year we took Paardeberg. Two days later David was a free man again, and Ladysmith relieved. Though we can't yet nail that infernal feller De Wet, we have been making it very wretched for him. He has been hunted from morning to night: frustrated in his efforts to break south, baffled again trying to go west—not so much by us as by two rivers in spate. Escaping somehow between the various columns after him, he has retraced his steps, and is now plodding along the south side of the Orange River, trying, it is said, to find a fordable drift, and with our

people yapping behind him, and others ready to bark in front, and more again sprinting up from the south to push him into the river. We have taken a number of his men, and what are believed to be his last two guns. As usual, it looks as if it were going badly with him, but we will not catch him. Still, if we have really knocked his Cape Colony venture on the head, that, though not the chief thing, is the most we can hope to do. But have we? The next three or four days should show; at any rate, even if we haven't, his invasion will be a very poor affair—no guns, few waggons, probably half his men deserted.

After Pretoria this is a most glorious climate, and the early morning air something like that on a Scotch moor. The country is quite different too, being huge great rolling downs with grass and earth to gallop upon, instead of grass and rocks to stumble over; and one feels as fit as a lark, and the rest and change is doing K. a lot of good. We brought our horses and ponies here, and are playing polo this afternoon. . . .

*28th February.*—Botha has come and gone. He arrived at 10 a.m. and left at 5 p.m., having brought four others of his staff with him. He was at once closeted with K., and remained so till 1 o'clock, when they adjourned for lunch. Then from 2 to 4.30 they were at it again. His four companions lay remarkably heavy on our chests after the first hour or two, but were quite good fellows, especially three of them, and could speak English well. Much chaff was bandied, and we got quite funny and witty at times. One of 'em was at Sanna's Post, so I asked him if he had done with my blankets and kit, perhaps he would kindly return them. "All right, give me my portmanteau that you took three weeks before at Abraham's Kraal"—and so on! Lunch

was rather a heavy meal, but cheery on the whole.

Louis is a great big fellow, running to fat a bit, but has a very nice expression indeed, and must be the good fellow one has always heard him to be. He is very quiet, shy, and reserved. His secretary, De Wet (no relation to "Chris"), is quite different, being decidedly vif and all there. He was educated at Cambridge, and is quite a good fellow. A sporting photographer intimating a wish to take a photograph of the crowd, we all posed, K. and Botha sitting next each other. If it comes to anything, I shall, of course, send you copies home. After that we gave them tea and saw them off to the outposts at 5 p.m. Since when there have been three solid hours of cipher to Brodrick, Milner & Co., telling them all the details of the meeting—very interesting, but not public property. However, there is no harm in saying that though, of course, nothing was settled, many points were raised, and, subject to home approval or correction, answered; and that the net result is very much better than K. expected. Botha makes no pretence of not wanting peace. Now we must wait for decisions on many points to come out from home; these have then to be given to Botha, and then he has to arrange with his "Government," people, etc.

To sum up, things look brighter than they did twenty-four hours ago, and possibilities of peace are possible, if it would be too much to say probable. . . .

Commander-in-Chief's Office,  
South Africa,  
March 15th, 1901.

MY DEAR FATHER—

The family telegram of congratulation sent (by Law?) from London on 9th, reached

me yesterday, and very many thanks to all for it. Besides the pleasure of getting it, it reassured me that the news was true, for the only information of it came through Reuter a week ago—9th, and I began to disbelieve it. I can't think what has induced them to give it to me; and modesty and all the rest of it aside, it must be about the cheapest V.C. yet won. However, I am awfully proud to have been the unworthy means of bringing the honour to the family; for, of course, it is a family and not an individual prize. Where would be the joy of getting it without this feeling? I have only one regret, and that is that some other brother or brothers (names unmentioned) should not have been the lucky one. But then, I'm always lucky. . . .

I think I have told you K. is a lover of animals—in a queer sort of way very often. The other morning we found him darting about his room in his early morning attire (tousled hair, short dressing-gown, etc.) trying to catch a couple of young starlings that had fallen down his chimney. We caught them after a heated chase, and deposited the poor little beggars in the wire pigeon-house in the garden. Then there was much fuss all day about their food; and the good man would leave his important duties every half hour to see if I had given them meat, or procured succulent worms, and bustle in and say they were starving. It was no use pointing out they hadn't learnt to eat by themselves yet, or that the pigeons wolfed any food put in for the infants. The poor parents were in great distress, flying round and round the cage, but at length got bold and fed the little things through the wire, which interested the Commander-in-Chief so much that the operations in South Africa received no attention most of the remainder of that day.

Next morning he complained to me that there was a third youngster outside, who he was certain was occupying an undue share of papa and mamma's attention, to the detriment of the babies inside, and I must try and catch it. (*Quite* an easy job to execute on a strong-on-the-wing young bird in an open garden!) He clamoured for this impossibility to such an extent that I thought the time had arrived for some remedy other than protestation of inability, which are in all things and at all times quite lost on K. of K. So, sneaking out of breakfast early, I whipped out a four-foot high sham stork that stands in the hall, and put it in the cage, and then lost myself, in case of accidents. The joke came off A 1. He was fairly drawn, laughed much, said I was an impertinent beast, and hasn't murmured a word about catching any more third birds. I tried this morning to induce him to let the surviving youngster out (one died last night), pointing out to him that the parents were becoming callous, and that he would die also, as he couldn't eat himself; and then the young ass of a bird gave away the show by paddling up to a fat worm placed there for his delectation and swallowing its whole length without a wink. So my case and his own chance of freedom were lost by that rash act, and his precocious capacity for teaching himself to eat in such a short time has been the ruin of this poor little starling's prospects in life. Besides, who can say what far-reaching results his capture may have, if the C.-in-C. of some 200,000 men *at war* spends half his day watching it "fluffing worms," and chirping at it through the wires? I suppose one should wish, under these circumstances, for the death of this poor bad bird; but he is an attractive little creature, and one can't. I'll let him loose though, if he looks at all like dying, K. or no K. . .

Pretoria,  
April 12th, 1901.

MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER—

Such a huge mail came in for me this week—forty letters, or rather, envelopes containing more than that number of letters. No end of thanks for all your congratulations, but I'm awfully sorry that this honour to the family has entailed so much correspondence on my parents; but it won't occur again, as far as I am concerned, though in the next war some other brother may be guilty of it, if they have my luck. It ought to have happened before through one of 'em, who isn't far from West Hill now. . . .

I left here on Sunday morning by train to take despatches and a map to General Plumer, who was on his way to Pietersburg, which is about the most northern town the Boers have, and is about 240 miles from here. I arrived at railhead at about 5.30 p.m., railhead being then about forty miles from Pietersburg, and some twenty-seven from where Plumer was believed to have reached that day. I had great trouble in persuading the commandant (C.O. of the Gordons) to let me go on, saying it was unsafe altogether, and I had better travel at crack of dawn. However, I told him I had a great deal too much regard for my skin to go by daylight, and after any amount of delay he produced me a guide and horses. So in pouring rain we got off at 8.30 p.m. My guide was an ex-Roberts' Horse man, and an inhabitant of Pietersburg before the war, so he knew the way well.

We did our travelling in a strange way, walking along the safe places, and all of a sudden breaking into a furious gallop for a mile or a mile and a half. The reason for this turned out to be that we were passing farms. With about half the journey



behind us, and while in the beastliest part of it—dense bush and koppies—my friend the guide became abnormally talkative, and unpleasantly noisy withal. It looked like liquor, so I watched him, and sure enough a black bottle was the cause of it. But it was in my wallet before he had another pull from it, and its withdrawal had the desired effect of quieting him, both on account of its absence and the feelings of its owner being slightly injured.

After this we broke into open country, the rain stopped, and pretty well soaked we arrived at Plumer's camp at 1.30 a.m., all safe and sound. The guide went off to some pals, and I bundled under the first waggon I came across. But it was too cold to sleep, and I was jolly glad when an early rising Kaffir lit a fire at 4.30, whereat I warmed my footsies. At 5 it began to lighten, and I translated my despatch from Hindustani into King's English (having left the original at rail-head) and gave it to little Plumer, who was surprised to get it. Old Scott, the Comdt., having seen me start, had wired to Plumer as soon as the field line was through, asking if it was safe for despatches to go through, and Plumer had answered on no account.

On Wednesday I came down by train, bringing some thirty-two prisoners with me. Some of them I placed on the front truck (pushed by the engine), as it seemed but fair they should enjoy their brothers' handiwork, should there be any. Luckily for them, there wasn't. After a very tedious journey we arrived at Pretoria at midnight, Lord K. having wired up special leave for us to travel by night, at my request, and very much to the engine driver's disgust, poor chap.

And so ended a very pleasant little trip out of vile Pretoria. Poor Dost Mahomed, whom I left

with my kit at railhead, was horribly disgusted at my not taking him, and doesn't take in good part at all my only reason for leaving him on such occasions, *viz.* if anything happened to either of us, he would almost certainly be shot by the Boers. He can't forget, either, his being left "in that nullah," as he always calls it, at Sanna's Post.

Coming down in my train was a surrendered Boer general—Cillgee—a nice old fellow. He honoured me by putting the whole of his family, thirty in number, in my truck. I don't know how many were children, grandchildren, etc. While talking, not to him, but another man, one of us mentioned Plumer. "What Plumer?" said the old general. "We thought there was only one Plumer knocking about these parts," we answered. "Oh, no," he said, "I know two Plumers—there's one squeaking away there," and he pointed to a three-day-old brat lying beside its mamma (who was carried into the truck on her bed!). "I am going to call him Plumer," he said, "because he was born the day Plumer took the place." The family certainly had taken to the name all right, as the infant was always alluded to among themselves as "Plumer." I had to change my quarters soon, as thirty Dutchwomen and children, one of them in bed, is a little trying. One would have thought Dost Mahomed and my presence awkward for them; but I don't think any such fine feelings came into action. . . .

Commanding-in-Chief's Office,  
South Africa,  
Pretoria,  
May 3rd, 1901.

MY DEAR FATHER—

. . . We are now High Commissioner of South Africa, as well as Commander-in-Chief, and

draw about £300 a month more ! which isn't so bad. In talking at or to K., we always say " we made a speech," " we drew so much pay," we are this and that. The object of this is that we shall participate in the emolument or credit, and he has to be frequently told that he doesn't take the hint in the right spirit, and shell out. . . .

Pretoria,  
May 24th, 1901.

MY DEAR FATHER—

. . . Lord K. went to Pietersburg three days ago, Hamilton and I staying behind. Unfortunately, no sooner was K. gone than his starling bird, now in a large roomy cage by itself, broke loose after being fed by a Highlander orderly, and took to the garden. Hamilton (the Military Secretary), who takes life terribly seriously, was completely floored by this catastrophe, and very wrath with my evident satisfaction. Having brooded over it all day, he thought the matter should be broken to the Chief while he was away, so that the shock would be less when he came back. I was told to send him a wire that would break the sad news cheerfully, and accordingly the following wire was sent :—

" C.-in-C.'s humming bird, after being fed by a Highlander this morning, broke cover and took to the open. Diligent search instituted ; biped still at large. My. Secy. desolate ; A.D.C. in tears. Army sympathises."

He returned yesterday, having apparently recovered from the first spasm of grief, and seemed to take the matter stoically. However, having rushed through the accumulations of two days' telegrams, he was out in the garden, and having gathered a small army of staff officers, menials,

and orderlies, was hunting that poor bird till lunch. The pursuit continued after that meal, and was only knocked off by him personally when it was time for him to go out riding. By that time he was in a fine mess, having repeatedly fallen prone in wet flower beds in his efforts to grab the starling. However, in the end the poor bird was captured at 7 p.m. in a neighbouring house's chimney, but minus its tail. And now it is hopping about its cage as before. Everybody tries to make out it is much happier there than outside—perhaps it is. If so, he showed extraordinary disinclination to get back to it, in spite of every inducement. K., as he gave up the pursuit to go into lunch, remarked breathlessly: "I've never been so fond of that bird as since it's been loose." In fact, lately he has spent what little leisure he has in spouting Hindustani, instead of chirping, at the bird. . . .

Pretoria,  
August 16th, 1901.

MY DEAREST MOTHER—

. . . After the photograph we drove to the Parade, the town being very prettily decorated. Here we found an enormous stand crammed with people, and in front of it a little domed pavilion, and troops, volunteers, cadets, etc., formed in square about it. Almost immediately after the Duke's arrival\* the presentation of decorations was begun, those to be honoured being in a long line, consisting of nine V.C.'s, and about fifty D.S.O.'s. No. 1 and my right-hand man was Major Brown of 14th Hussars—curiously enough an O.U.S.C., like myself. He went out first and was decorated, and then I had to go, and it seemed hours that one had to stand while the business was

\* Duke of York, now H.M. King George V.

being spouted out. However, it came to an end, and H.R.H. was able to get rid of me, though while he pinned it on, he said, "I must take care not to dig it into your chest"—then shook hands and let me go. After this part of the show was over some 200 native chiefs formed up in line, in front of and some distance from the pavilion, and then in a semi-circle advanced very slowly, chanting some deep-chested war song. It was a very fine sight and sound, but totally marred to, I think, most people's minds, by the presence of half a dozen Europeans in top hats and evening dress playing about in front of the line to keep the dressing, etc. It turned the whole thing from a really imposing and picturesque scene into a circus.

The chiefs were in full war paint, and a wonderful sight they presented, and when after advancing some 200 yards, singing all the while, they halted, and at some signal gave full vent to "Bayete," their royal salute, it was splendid. Three times these great deep-chested warriors "Bayeted," and never would one imagine that such a volume of sound could come from such a small number of throats. No cheer one has ever heard, even from hundreds of thousands, had the depth, power, and volume of this royal salute, and I would go a long way to hear it again.

After they came to the halt, Sir H. McCallum (Governor of Natal), as paramount chief, read an address to the Duke, who replied. One of the top-hatted flunkies translated it to the Chief, in what seemed a canary's voice. Then the Duke walked round the chiefs. But I don't think they improved on close acquaintance; physically fine though many of them were, their odour was strikingly painful—as, no doubt, ours was to them!

That was the end of the show, and we returned with the Chief to Government House, he, of course, driving with the Duchess. We pottered about there till 6 o'clock, while K. was closeted with the Duke and Duchess. Then they came down, K. very pleased with himself, the Duke having given him a very handsome gold cigarette case and photographs of himself and the Duchess. Then we were told to "shake" and say good-bye, which we did, and then cleared off to the train. . . .

Pretoria,  
September 13th, 1901.

MY DEAR FATHER—

. . . K. is not the purposely rough-mannered, impolite person those who have never even seen him suppose. He is awfully shy, and until he knows any one his manners—except to ladies—are certainly not engaging. He really feels nice things, but to put tongue to them, except in very intimate society, he would rather die. . . . I suppose most Englishmen loathe any sort of gush, display of sentiment. K. is unfortunately endowed with ten times most people's share of this virtue, with the result that it is almost a vice in him.

This is a long harangue on the immaculateness of my Chief—due, you'll say, possibly to loyalty. But loyalty should not blind one to facts, and what I have said is in spite of—not because of—the loyalty one owes one's chief, whoever he may be. . . .

I have just given K. mother's message about engine-drivers. He says I am to tell her engine-drivers would not appreciate mentions in despatches, but that he is going to give them all medals, and has already given many of them gold watches, suitably inscribed, for gallant conduct. . . .

Pretoria,  
October 4th, 1901.

MY DEAREST MOTHER—

. . . We (Army) have got our way with the Cape crowd at last, and martial law in the Cape ports will be in full swing in a few days. Sir Gordon Sprigg (Prime Minister), Rose Innes (Att. General), and Frost (Minister of Defence) were summoned by Lord Milner to Johannesburg, where they arrived last Monday. K. and I went over on Tuesday for the day, and they had a great meeting, the Chief dressing them down like anything, and rubbing it into them really hot and strong. . . . The Chief believes in short discussions, and makes them hot while they last, and absolutely refused to continue it after lunch. . . .

After lunch I bore K. off to a photographer, where he was taken in various fancy attitudes. He simply hates being photographed ordinarily, but was like a lamb about this; in fact, after nearly half an hour of the painful ordeal, came bounding downstairs horribly pleased with himself—so pleased apparently that he wanted more of it, and insisted on my going up with him and getting taken with him. He made a vile fuss about my appearance. "Take that cap off, my dear boy." "Good Heavens, your hair's all over the place; go and brush it." "I wish you would wear collars and not hunting ties," etc. However, we were shot all right, and then left, pursued by the photographer, who wanted one favour from Lord Kitchener. Thinking it was sure to be his leave to publish his photograph, I asked him what it was: "To shake Lord K.'s hand," he replied. This seemed harmless enough, and I halted K., who gave his paw quite nicely. . . .



F. A. M. WITH LORD KITCHENER.  
OCTOBER 4TH, 1901.





Pretoria,  
November 1st, 1901.

MY DEAREST MOTHER—

. . . You will be delighted to hear, I know, that my orderly, Dost Mahomed Khan, has been given the Native V.C. (Order of Merit), the announcement having, I hear, actually appeared in General Orders in India. He was rather overwhelmed with the news, having not the slightest idea he had been recommended for it. I am so awfully pleased, for he is a real good plucked one, and nobody has better earned it. Like the V.C. (£10 per annum for rank and file) it carries, a monetary reward with it, how much I forget, but something quite acceptable, I know. . . .

Johannesburg,  
December 20th, 1901.

MY DEAR MOTHER—

. . . K. and I went off for three or four days' ramp along the eastern line, and came straight here, where in the interval the establishment had moved. The trip was not very exciting, the Chief's principal reason for going being to see surrendered burghers in the concentration camps, and to speak to them. He told them how the land lay, and said what the Boers in the field should now do was to turn out what they called their present Government, and elect men who would come into Pretoria and see him (K.) about peace. There was much talk on both sides, and each camp professed its utmost agreement with all he said, but asked how they should pass his words of wisdom on to their friends in command—going out meant shooting.

K. said he didn't wish them to risk their lives, and didn't really see the necessity of any one going,

because he thought there were *other means* of communication with Boers outside than this method. Though he spoke through an interpreter, this particular phrase seemed at once and universally understood, and in each camp produced the most spontaneous burst of mirth, and they all seemed to enjoy K.'s perspicuity in spotting this little fact. He invited any of them who felt like it to enlist in the "National Scouts," and recruiting was most brisk, the four camps producing 200 or 300 men. Each camp at the termination of the palaver gave three cheers—very weird noises!!

There is no doubt about it, the Boer has an unqualified partiality for K. of K.—I suppose because they know he is quite straight in his dealings with them, and because they know he is a *strong* man. . . .

Pretoria,  
March 2nd, 1902.

MY DEAR FATHER—

. . . We have just returned from a four days' trip, and enjoyed it tremendously. Going to Harrismith on the 26th, on our way we whirled round and round Majuba, and next day celebrated the anniversary of that disastrous day by bagging a total of 828 Boers, live and dead. On arriving at Harrismith, we rode and swarmed up an enormous scarped mountain, called Platberg, which stands 1000-1200 feet above the level of the surrounding country, and from the top of which we had the most glorious and extended view. We faced north, and from E. to W. the country was covered by our troops driving against the blockhouse line, which runs E. to W., and in which line the Platberg itself lay.

The scene was a wonderful one. Far away down in the plain—undulating, and here and there

broken by great rough koppies—could be seen our people crawling about like ants, and behind them, either in black clump, or trailing in long streaks, waggons and carts and cattle. Here and there heliographs flashed, causing much excitement among our signallers, who blessed or cursed according as the sun shone, or did not. However, we hadn't been on the berg ten minutes before from fifty miles away to our right came a twinkle, twinkle, message, which spelt out by the signaller read: "400 Boers laid down their arms to me this morning, and——" the sun went out, and so we got no more details. But 400 Boers from one column was promising, and if nothing else was produced, the long drive would not be fruitless.

Later, peering over the edge of our precipice—the foot of which was invisible—we could see a small force dismount and fire vigorously at our mountain. It puzzled us a good deal to think what they could be at, nor did we learn till next morning that they were Canadians, firing into a kloof below us, on the chance of picking out some Boers. They did all right, getting twenty!

A long clamber down again at dusk brought us to more normal levels, and our train, where we hoped during the night to get some fuller reports. However, we didn't, and so went to bed with 400 to sleep on.

Next morning up at 4.30–5, and till 7 a.m. busy preparing the scheme for a new drive. K. is an extraordinary person. He sleeps and dreams on schemes all night, and in the morning, in pyjamas and dishevelled head, gets you to work with scale and pencil and maps, and in two hours plans are more or less complete, and orders more or less drafted. Then, being a quick-change artist, he is off and has shaved, dressed and ready

to ride out to columns while you are but washing your teeth.

Everything is at high pressure; at 7.15 we were off at a gallop, and visited two small columns and two large ones. Quite unofficial visits, the commanders being unwarned, almost invariably being found in their blankets having a well-earned sleep. No one is turned out, but K. just rides through the lines looking at the horses and speaking to any one who happens to be about. Fifteen to twenty mile canter, mostly through herds of lowing cattle, brought us back to the station at 10. Breakfast and an hour up the line, we again disembarked, and galloped out to see more columns, the farthest being about seven miles out. Here we found the New Zealanders, who had put up a very fine fight with De Wet's lot, who had broken through some three nights before. K. made them a little speech, which pleased them mightily, and so on to the next. . . .

Pretoria,  
March 16th, 1902.

MY DEAR FATHER—

. . . However, if such things \* didn't happen now and then, this wouldn't be a war. No doubt you at home think a great deal more of it than we do—possibly because there is a great deal too much else going on to leave time to greet long about any one mishap. But it floored poor old K. more than anything else during the campaign, and he didn't appear at five meals.

On the morning of his recovery, however, when I hobbled (being a bit lame from a fall) in

\* The reference is to the Boer success against Lord Methuen's column in the Western Transvaal, when he was operating against Delarey near Klerksdorp. Lord Methuen was wounded and made a prisoner with most of his force, but was sent back almost immediately by Delarey to our lines at Klerksdorp.

to breakfast, where he was alone, he said : " How's your leg ? " I said all right, knowing he expected me to ask how he was. But as I was perfectly well aware that he wasn't ill, I sat tight and said nuffink. Not getting any enquiry about himself (in which case he would have probably have said " All right "), he volunteered the remark that he believed " his nerves had all gone to pieces "—and when I told him it was quite the most natural result of practically forty-eight hours' starvation, he very practically agreed by eating a very sound, for him, breakfast. And that was the end of the slump in his spirits, and he is, and has been, as right as possible since.

The correspondence between the Netherlands Government and ours having been forwarded out here, was sent some little time ago by the Chief to Schalk Burgher. Having perused it, S. B. sent in to say he would like to offer terms of peace, but would first like to confer with Steyn, and requested a safe conduct through our lines. This has been granted, but S. B. has not arrived from the veldt to the railway line yet. K. hopes to catch him on the way through and talk matters over with him before he sees Steyn, and means to try inducing him to have a conference between themselves, Steyn, Botha, etc.

Nobody thinks anything will come of the business, for Steyn, being a much cleverer man than Schalk, will talk him round in no time. Still no harm is done, and good may result. . . .

Pretoria,  
March 23rd, 1902.

MY DEAREST MOTHER—

. . . We had the so-called Boer Government in here yesterday—six of them: Schalk

Burgher, a gloomy Quaker-like person, very silent and uncommunicative; Reitz, who, now a Transvaaler, was formerly President of Orange Free State, a viv-looking old man, and no doubt the master spirit of the party; Krogh, a stout little party, with a jovial countenance, and with more physical than moral weight; Lucas Meyer, a fine six-foot-four fellow, with a grey beard and honest face; and two others, Jacobs and Van Velden, the latter of whom was of Botha's party at Middleburg meeting last year.

Till their arrival at Pretoria station they had no idea that they were to be asked to get out and see Lord K., and when it was suggested they rather demurred. However, we packed them into carts, and drove them down to the house. The Chief interviewed them, but found them quite uncommunicative, and evidently feeling they had been rather bounced into the interview. So they jolly well had; but K. isn't one that lets any sort of chance slip by, and wanted a word with them before seeing Steyn. The wife and daughter of tubby little Krogh had been invited to be in the garden to meet Krogh, who broke from the room, and before we others could disperse and pretend not to see, the three were in each others arms—all much too overwhelmed to think about privacy.

Van Velden was next to be seen to leave—in search evidently for female relatives (we had sought for her, but she had left for Cape Colony a week ago). Wandering round the house, in the hopes of discovering what he looked for, he was seized by the chief Duffadar orderly, who doubtless thought he was escaping, and brought back the poor fellow, much disappointed at not finding his Mrs.

The interview producing nothing, K. dismissed it, and while the others drove to the station, I

drove Lucas Meyer to the town (D. coming with us) to buy some shirts! After his purchase we hunted for his daughter, but drew blank, as she had gone to Scotland with mamma. I believe old Lucas only wanted a drive, because he said he had seen in the papers she had gone, but didn't mention this information till we definitely learnt she had done so.

They all went off again at 4.30, in charge of Marker and two other officers, to Kronstadt, whence it is proposed they shall sally out to hunt for Steyn. An odd feature of this business was the surreptitious application to Marker of four out of five of the Government personal servants to surrender. Knock off to go to church. . . .

K., Birdwood, and I went down to Klerksdorp a few days ago, so that K. could himself explain the scheme without the use of the telegraph, which lets out secrets in spite of cipher. Though this big thing moves in about two hours, only four column commanders, the Chief, Birdwood, Hamilton, and I know a word about it. You'll ask why I am in the secret when important persons are not. Only because I had to do the map part of the scheme. The whole idea of this plan is absolute surprise, and this would never be obtained if many knew the secret. It's not necessary in the least that the scheme itself should be known to spoil it, but the mere fact of there being orders afloat at once get out of the place, and Boers don't wait for more than a hint of that. . . .

Pretoria,  
April 13th, 1902.

MY DEAREST MOTHER—

. . . *Perhaps* we are near the end. It's a big word this "perhaps," and if we don't make it a "has been" now, we shall have to buckle to



and make up our minds for most probably another eight to twelve months' war. All the Transvaal and O.R.C. Govts. are now here, and yesterday had a meeting in this house with K.

The result of this will probably be published before this reaches you. Briefly, they put forward Independence, and, with the knowledge that it would be refused, requested Govt. to state what terms they were prepared to offer the Boers. The question of Independence had to be brought up, they said, to save their faces with their people. Our Govt., of course, wish them to make proposals—including Independence—and they will be invited again to do this to-morrow, when they will be informed formally that Independence cannot be entertained.

Schalk Burger and Reitz I have already described in a former letter. The latter is a clever creature, and was expected to be mischievous. However, the astute K. seized on him as his interpreter, and kept him so busy translating for both sides that he was unable to put in a word on his own account. Only Hamilton (Military Secretary) was present besides my poor little Chief among this crew of twelve, and he would not have been present except for Govt. instructions at the last minute, saying there should be a witness.

K. did the business extraordinarily well, H. says. They are all afraid of K., and all respect him tremendously. There will be another meeting to-morrow, at which Milner, who comes here to-night, will be present.

Botha has his little boy of ten years here with him—a nice little kid, who looks none the worse for campaigning at his early age.

The two Govts. live in separate houses about two miles apart, and have a youthful officer living with each. We feel the pulse of the

Transvaalers very accurately through one of their number, who is so much for peace that he is almost more one of us than of them, and tells all the results of their discussions.

Army Headquarters,  
South Africa,  
April 20th, 1902.

MY DEAREST MOTHER—

. . . All the Boer representatives have left us, and if we see anything more of them at all, it will not be for full three weeks. As I told you in my last, they had a meeting with K. the day they arrived. On Sunday there was no meeting, but the two Presidents had tea with the Chief. On Monday there was a full meeting, with Milner also present. Much talking and an adjournment till 3 p.m., when there was plenty more, and a long telegram home containing a message from the Boers to H.M. Govt.

On Tuesday nothing, and most of them drove down to polo and watched us playing the noble game with the keenest interest, all voting it a game to be played and encouraged. Lords K. and M. rode down also, so the polo ground contained some rather interesting persons. Steyn didn't come down, his eyes being too bad. He was tremendously keen to see polo, but how on earth he could have seen anything, had he come, I can't imagine, for he is nearly blind, and has creeping paralysis as well.

On Wednesday there was nothing till the evening, when the Cabinet's decision on many things came out in a long telegram. Lord K. met Botha and Delarey during the day, and discussed various questions regarding the wearing of khaki, employment of natives, etc.

On Thursday a meeting at 10 a.m., when the telegram with our Govt.'s views, etc., was read

to them. There was an adjournment almost at once, and they had a long meeting of themselves, returning at 3 p.m. Result of this was that it was decided the representatives should return to their people, put whole situation, terms offered, etc., before them, get each Commando to elect two representatives, and order them later to assemble at Vereeniging (railway border town of O.R.C.—Transvaal) on May 13th or 15th. Here the sixty to seventy elected representatives will vote for acceptance, or otherwise. If the issue is favourable, the two so-called Govts. will return here on about 17th and arrange final settlement, and "I'll make them sign peace on 18th," says K. If unfavourable, they will return to their Commandos and we shall kill them just as soon as they like, or we can. They tried very hard to get an armistice out of K., but he absolutely refused this, saying they were asking too much and giving no guarantee or anything in exchange. Of course, they said the difficulties of visiting their scattered Commandos would, without armistice, not only be difficult, but would take a long time. However, K. stuck to his point, but has given them certain facilities, and promised that meetings, if advertised, shall not be disturbed, etc., etc.

On Friday our friends took their departure, all going different ways—N., S., E., and W.

They are all immensely impressed with the Chief, who handles them splendidly. One of them said, "I can see right through Lord Kitchener"—meaning by this, he was so straight. It's quite extraordinary how openly the Transvaalers are with us, Botha, during his journey back to Vryheid with Marker, openly discussing the points and individuals that will facilitate, and those that will militate against the desired end. Louis brought his little son here, ten years old, and has now taken

K.'s advice, and sent him to school in Natal. He is a nice little creature, and told me he never wanted to leave Pretoria, to hear again the well-known warning at midnight or crack of dawn, of "Khaki commt." . . .

Pretoria,  
May 12th, 1902.

MY DEAREST MOTHER—

. . . This day next week we should know what it is to be—peace or war. . . . The feeling of most people seems to be that unless we insist on unconditional surrender, and they comply, peace should be impossible. Very few, I think, realise what unconditional surrender means to the Boer mind. They say (and we have it actually in writing): "If we surrender *unconditionally* now, nothing binds us against taking up arms again and fighting for our Independence later, when the British Govt. are embarrassed." That's their line—and the Chief says he conceives they are right logically, and that abroad it would be accepted as legal. If, on the other hand, we say, "If you drop your Independence (an absolute *sine qua non*) we shall consider your position, and offer you certain terms," the Boers regard the acceptance of this as binding them for ever to us, and precluding any thought of future Independence.

Pretoria,  
June 8th, 1902.

MY DEAR FATHER—

We are all a bit full of ourselves, having got Peace. To-day being Sunday, it is possible that you may not know till to-morrow morning; but I fancy that the great news will have leaked down to Guildford somehow, as we telegraphed home at 11 p.m. last night (about 9 p.m. your time).

We knew at 3.30 p.m. it was all right, but the

Boers particularly requested their decision might be kept secret until the Peace document had been signed, at the same time suggesting that as it was late and next day was Sunday, it had better be signed on Monday. This wouldn't do at all at all, so they were bundled into a train brought up here by 10.30 p.m., whisked down to our house, thrown into the dining-room, allowed three minutes to themselves, and then politely but firmly requested to "sign, please"—and it was all over by 11 p.m.

Tell mother I have the pen that Botha signed with, and two or three other nobbs, and shall bring it home for her.

Immediately I had sent off the wire to Brodrick, I galloped down to the town, and roused up one or two households who have been my particular pals here, and the result was slightly startling. Before we had got back—Brooke, Sir Ian Hamilton's A.D.C., was with me—there was a frightful uproar, cheering and singing, and about 100 youths (mostly ex-Yeomen employed in Govt. offices) were parading the streets at midnight, cheering K., etc., and singing jingo songs! and they kept this up till about 3 a.m.

This morning we had "Peace, perfect peace" in church, and everybody is feeling a bit above themselves.

After Peace was signed with the Boers in June, 1902, Maxwell returned to England with Lord Kitchener, and was employed as Special Staff Officer with him during his stay in England until October. After a month's leave he sailed for India with Lord Kitchener, who went out as Commander-in-Chief, and for the next two years, the period covered by this series of letters, Maxwell served as an A.D.C. on his Staff.

## CHAPTER IV

### INDIA AND AUSTRALIA

Camp,  
Begun September 28th, 1903.

MY DEAREST MOTHER—

We have done twenty-eight to thirty miles every day since leaving Chitral, but luckily have fresh ponies for baggage almost every day. We had a long journey to-day over stones, sand, etc., and the Chief was jolly sick of it, especially as no kit came in till late. However, he used to clamour for long marches, in spite of my remonstrances (the arrangements for the tour being my job), and so now, though he grouses like fun to the others, he doesn't dare say a word to me, knowing jolly well I'd have him on toast!

To-morrow we have thirty and a half miles worse going, and finish up at our 11,999 feet without kit till probably about 7 p.m. I think by that time he'll be sick of long marches, which will be a good thing for everybody, especially the animals. He was very "naughty" for three days after leaving Chitral, the original cause being seediness. Nothing was right; he insisted that his ponies were dead beat, and hinted that I took insufficient care of 'em, etc., and to score off us as a whole, said he was afraid he couldn't take us all round that trip with him. This wouldn't have mattered if he'd said so sooner, because Victor \* and I would

\* Colonel Victor Brooke, D.S.O., 9th Lancers, died in France, 1914.

gladly have hurried back to Gilgit and got an extra two or three days' shooting ; but deciding this at the last moment prevented any such arrangement. However, next day he was recovering from what we call the "poisoned pup" state, and I got him to change his mind quite easily, and made him feel, I really think, rather ashamed of his behaviour during the previous three days—a good thing for him to feel now and then. This sounds very egotistical, but it seems such a pity a big man like he is should make an idiot of himself, and instead of being corrected or shown that he is doing so, to have people, if not encouraging it, at any rate acquiescing in it. So I generally tell him one way or another. He is extraordinarily good about it, and never rounds on one, as I think most mortals would.

The yak is the queerest animal one ever threw a leg across. His large hairy exterior reminds one of the Highland bull. His bushy tail, which he waves ferociously, or carries on end, according to the state of his feelings, reminds one of nothing but the pictures of yaks. He travels with his head low down, his nose ploughing through the snow, which his tongue, hung out of his always open panting mouth, licks up the whole time. Encouragement to proceed faster is only effected by powerful blows with a cudgel on one particular spot of his anatomy, and this being his backbone, just above the bushy tail. Hammer him elsewhere, and he thinks you are offering him an endearment. He is led by a rope through his nose, or if you are a good yakman, you can hold his primitive rein yourself and steer him as with a tiller. It amuses this strange animal to halt suddenly and throw you with violence, if you aren't careful, on to his massive head, some miles away down below you. It also appeals to his

sense of humour to rub up as close against another yak as possible and knock horns. This is quite amusing to the rider also, so long as the other's horns don't get mixed up with his shins, or get poking about his calves—then I can assure you from personal experience, it isn't.

The poor beasts carrying our kit had to come right down the pass to about 10,000 feet, where ponies were to relieve them. They arrived panting and with tongues out like dead beat dogs, and as soon as off-loaded, were hurried off up the pass again, where no doubt they are now happily browsing off fids of snow in the violent storm now going on up there. The well-known ballad of "Jack's the boy for me" finds no place in this camp, and from K. downwards, nothing is heard but—to the same air (approximately in the case of K.)—"The Yak's the mount for me." With this little pleasantry I will off it to dinner, for they are all shouting.

*2nd October, Yasin.*—On arrival at this place we challenged the Governor at polo on their ponies. They accepted, and at 2.30 p.m. we started in procession to the polo ground. We got K. to say he'd play, and off we went, with a band of four Sirnais and six drums leading the way. Next came K., his pony held by a man each side, the Mehtar (Governor) ditto, and ourselves. The opposite side performed feats of horsemanship all the way, galloping madly about the plain, jumping walls, etc. This they told us was to get their ponies' blood up for the tourney.

The game was started by the Governor galloping from his goal to half-way down the ground, ball in hand; arrived half-way, he flung the ball in air and going top speed, hit it a rare crack down towards our goal; then we went at it hammer and tongs, and had great fun, old K. playing up like



a man on rather a slow nag. With him playing they beat us, but after twenty minutes he stopped, and we went on again for three-quarters of an hour, finally finishing well, three goals to our two. It was simply splendid, and I never enjoyed anything more. We each played the same pony right through, and it may surprise you to hear that they had all done twenty-four miles with us just before, and will carry us twenty-five to-morrow. A band of drums and pipes played all the time, and the spectators were enthusiastic to a degree.

On the way home, just to show there was no ill feeling, the team galloped over hedge, wall, and ditch, the clever and apparently still quite fresh ponies being as clever as monkeys over country. I forgot to say that as the losers we should have danced to the winners on the conclusion of the game, but in the end persuaded three of the opposite team to do so instead. Then the Governor, his two brothers, the Wazir, the local Archbishop (a great swell in clerics) and his curate, came along and had tea with us.

Calcutta,  
Winter, 1903.

MY DEAREST MOTHER—

. . . English Lord, my horse, has also done good work to-day. I think I told you last week that he had come in sixth at the weekly paper chase; to-day he galloped and jumped all round his large field of sixty or seventy opponents and walked in first very comfortably. So, if all is well, you will see the dear old thing at home this time next year, I hope. My orderly, an extraordinary character (no longer Dost Mahomed, who is with the regiment), says the horse's heart is so big that if he was asked to jump right over



PIG-STICKING, 1903.  
F. A. M. ON "ENGLISH LORD."



the Lord Sahib's house, he would try to, although he would know he *probably* couldn't do it. He simply loves him, and takes infinitely more interest and trouble and care about him than lots of women seem to about their children. But what shows his real insight into the horse's character is his recognition and tremendous idea of his “dil” (heart), for never was there a horse with a bigger and more courageous one—a fact I have learnt from experience many a time. And in man or beast, what is more endearing than a lion-heart, though particularly in beast ?

Commander-in-Chief's Camp,  
India,  
December 16th, 1903.

MY DEAREST MOTHER—

. . . K. has had rather a bad four or five days, though he is now all right and out of bed. He got a stitch or something from always lying in one position, which made him very unsociable. He couldn't read, nor play bridge, and lay and moped all day. He never allows any one to do anything for him, and has steadily from the first refused to be read aloud to. However, he has caved in in this regard at last, and finds he rather likes it. Three days ago I found him at about 5 p.m. looking grievously sorry for himself and without a kick in him. Following is the dialogue, accurately described, which ensued:—

“Bridge to-night, sir?” in the most objectionably cheerful voice. Answer from bed, hardly audible, “Oh dear, no.” “That's a pity; aren't you feeling quite up to the mark?” Reply, a groan. “Here's the paper, would you like to read it?” Deep sigh, and “I can't possibly.” “All right, I'll just read you out some of it, shall I?” “No, don't bother.” And so

the paper was read through, accompanied by heavy sighs from the bed.

That finished, dialogue begins again. "Paper is finished; what book are you reading, sir?" Feebly, "I don't know." "Oh, yes; I expect it's this one, is it?" "No, I don't think so." "Which one then?" No answer. "Oh, I know; you were reading 'Gough's Life.' How far have you got in it?" "I don't know," and a groan. "All right then, as you haven't finished it, I'll read the last chapter, which will make certain of not going over same ground." Then, however, seeing there was no way out of it, he let out where he was in the book, and we soon got to work. Moans, frequent at first, gave place to short exclamations on anything that interested him in the book, and he never suggested a stop till more than two hours afterwards, when I had to go and change for dinner. . . .

Frank Maxwell resigned his appointment as A.D.C. to the C.-in-C. in November, 1904, and went to England, where for two years he was a student at the Staff College at Camberley. On returning to India in March, 1907, with Mrs. Maxwell, he rejoined his regiment, and after that held various staff appointments, until in April, 1910, he went to Australia as Instructor of Light Horse. His work consisted in touring to the various headquarters of Light Horse, and he also held a school of instruction near Melbourne. A few extracts from letters, written to Mrs. Maxwell during this period, are given to illustrate the sort of life he was leading. He always spoke of his work among the Australian Light Horse as one of the most encouraging experiences of his life,



DELHI, 1907.  
F. A. M. WITH DOST MAHOMED.



and his optimism has been more than justified during the European War. His appointment in Australia was intended to last for a year; but owing to some difficulty at the War Office about exchange officers, in June, 1910, he was ordered to return to India, and was about to do so, when he received an invitation from Lord Hardinge, of Penshurst, Viceroy-Elect, to become his military secretary. He accepted the appointment, and joined Lord Hardinge's Staff in Calcutta in November, 1910. He remained with Lord Hardinge throughout the latter's term of office, and the part of this volume which follows gives a few letters written during this period. His mother died early in 1914, and Mrs. Maxwell was with him in India most of the time, so that the correspondence is comparatively slight during those years.

Yea,  
Sunday, a.m.,  
May, 1910.

. . . I think you would be amused to see the sort of life I am leading. It certainly amuses me—and I can realise how fortunate I am that it does so, for so easily it might not. I hobnob with all sorts—that has always amused me, because I like live people better than things—and consequently I hear all sorts of views on different matters, and meet with lots to learn. Farmers tell me about their farms; sheep people about their sheep; hotel proprietors (a quaint crowd) about the pubs; the man that drives me up in a "cab" always seems to be a racing card, and on one occasion the horse one of them was driving (and no bad one was it either) was going to run in something somewhere next week!



The Seymour "Royal Hotel" was quite a quaint place, and its landlord had the oddest ideas of hospitality—explained by the Light Horse subaltern, a very good fellow, as being a bit too *aristocratic* in his ideas. Had he said "democratic" he would still have been off the mark. Any one in the "hotel" seemed to be a plaguey nuisance to him.

At tea (I have all my night meals at 6 p.m. now) I was offered the choice of hot fish or cold tongue; and when I asked if it would be a crime to have both, the slavey looked at master and nearly fainted. And yet money was no object, for he gave me a wholly inadequate account for 4s. instead of about 7s., and next morning refused money for his cab.

Could I be called in the morning at six? Well, he was afraid not; but if he got up himself to see his "rice-horse" exercising, he would give me a shout. I would like some shaving water at same time. Oh, that he was afraid couldn't be done, as no fires would be alight so early as 6 or 6.30 either. Days were drawing in, you know. Breakfast! Oh, you'll get that at so and so station!

It was all much too funny to feel even in the least annoyed, because it was so evident it was done out of no intentional ill-nature, but just it was the nature of the beast. And yet the same chap, when I asked him to lend me a collar-stud, ransacked the whole of his "Royal" hotel to find one, and lugged my bag about for me all over the place when I was leaving. . . .

School of Instruction,  
Near Melbourne,  
Thursday night.

. . . Eight hours a day and I haven't much in common. Seven a.m. till midnight or later,

with about half an hour out for three meals, makes more than eight; but I'm jolly fit and looking forward to to-morrow week. After to-morrow, however, it won't be quite such a grind, as I shall have finished my lectures. . . .

Just got another one and a quarter jaw off my chest, and planned to come straight back to my room to start on to-morrow; but these cussed fellows get so keen, that they come humbugging round asking innumerable questions, so that I lost an hour's good work.

I have been rubbing and rubbing into them the necessity of dash and the mounted spirit in everything; so though I haven't used the word "Dash" itself more than two or three times, when I asked to-night if any one could spell light horseman in four letters, half of them were on their feet yelling D A S H—which was quite satisfactory proof that some of it has sunk into their minds, and that they like the idea. . . .

Sunday, a.m.

. . . It's amusing to hear these coves talk, bringing in their conversation odds and ends of my lectures that have tickled their quaint fancies. Just now half a dozen were yarning outside, and one of them said something about "footslogging" (which it seems is a new expression to them). Roars of laughter from the four other Light Horsemen, and a spirited attack on the first individual by one of the three infantrymen in the school, who, tapping his middle, said, "Well, anyway, I've got 'guts,'" and went for his enemy.

The relation of the two expressions came out in a lecture when illustrating the weary and dangerous task of the infantryman footslogging it up to a position held by the enemy, taking

bullets all the way, and how filled with admiration I always was to see it done, and how full of wonder I always was that a man had the "guts" to do it. We horse-soldiers got over the ground quickly and with everything in our favour. "Where in the whole world will you find any easier method of transforming a fairly kind, decent Britisher into a ruddy Tiger than by putting him on to a horse and pelting him over the country; and if you can arrange to knock over a pal or two of his *en route*, you'll find he is ready to eat any one he finds in the enemy's position."

It was a comparison of the two methods of attack—the slow, dangerous and laborious one of the infantry, and the other which is *open* to Light Horse, if they'll choose it. So now they call the right way "Tiger tactics," and the other "guts."

The Royal visit to India in December, 1911, naturally meant much hard work for Frank Maxwell as Military Secretary.

Government House, Bombay.

Begun January 10th, 1912.

Yesterday we saw the King and Queen off, and after feeling as if a Republic was the only possible form of government, I am personally beginning to recover my loyalty to a *Throne!* The past year has been a real bad one, and the last five weeks of it almost unendurable. But the labours and troubles will shortly disappear from one's recollection and leave only the memory of a great success. I was always an optimist as to the political value of a Royal visit, and I believe there are very few, if any, pessimists now left on this side of the Indian ocean, at any rate.

Delhi was a revelation in many ways, but the King's reception in Calcutta was more so. Whether it would have been the same without the

(partial) reversal of the partition it is difficult, of course, to say ; but the enthusiasm of the people was most remarkable. A million people seemed to be always on holiday ready to crush to any place, or along any route the King might go to or use. Thousands always hung about outside Government House, their waiting, so the police say, taking the form of " puja " (worship) of the house holding the King and Queen.

Scanning the crowd closely, as a Royal procession passed, one noticed that amid a great deal of clapping of hands, waving of scarves or shawls, the greater proportion of the populace seemed to have their hands joined and heads bowed—that is, were in the attitude of prayer or worship. As at Delhi after the Durbar, so after the performance of the Pageant in Calcutta, a crowd of several thousand rushed over the maidan after the King and Viceroy had left and made obeisance to the " thrones " (chairs occupied by the King and Queen). They picked up dust off the ground in front of the Royal pavilion and put it on their foreheads. A man who saw this going on, just after we had left, told me it was not a country crowd, but one composed of well-to-do natives—of the " babu " or educated classes, and usually credited with disloyalty and sedition in the past few years.

On the first day of arrival a funny English-speaking little " squirt " of a Babu pulled me up near my house, and said he had waited for days and days for the King's coming, and that now he had come, the crowds were so great he hadn't been able to get even a glimpse of him. What was he to do ? Would the King ever be seen in public again ? I told him if he came next day he would see the King going to church. So as I left my house next morning there was my friend kissing my feet before I knew what was happening. It

was 10 a.m., and he had been waiting there since 5. So I took him, astonished and rather afraid, into Government House grounds, put him in charge of a European police-sergeant, with instructions for him to be taken to the gate out of which the King would pass within four yards of him. He had his view all right, but so overcome was he with gratitude that he at once adopted me as his father, and for days the wretch pestered me with the petition that his mother might come "only for three or five minutes, sir," to do worship the King. To see him was evidently not enough for the old lady; she must worship him, and evidently gave her one and only glad time to enable her to do so. However, this praiseworthy desire could not be allowed, as the King had just a bit too much to do to admit of his receiving the "worship" of my adopted son's mamma. So I had to be almost cruel to my "son" before I had done with him.

Before they left Calcutta, the Queen gave Char\* photographs of herself and the King, also the latter presented me with a very elaborate cigarette case. . . .

They get lots of amusement out of anything, and are always laughing at things. At the court, which we ran for them entirely—and what a business it and the levée were—they saw lots to tickle them. One native lady—it often happens with them, as with some white—mistook me for the King. She halted opposite me, and when I read out her name, made her salaam and passed by the King and Queen (on my left) as if all her job of the evening were quite finished.

It's a horrible business this of the levée and court, and very tiring; it doesn't suit my constitution either to be the miserable cynosure of a

\* Mrs. Frank Maxwell.

critical crowd. For instance, when the King and Queen are on the throne surrounded by all their suite, I had to emerge in front of them, bow and ask permission to open the court (or levée). Then when the 200 odd ladies of the private entrée have passed and are all seated in the room, another advance to the front of the throne has to be made, to inform their majesties "that the private entrée is now closed; have I your Imperial Majesties' permission to open the public entrée?" And so again, when it is all over.

However, it was a great success, and we easily beat the Lord Chamberlain's time of passing people through at both levée and court.

In the autumn Maxwell accompanied the Viceroy on tour in Kashmir.

Viceroy's Camp, India.

Begun October 16th, 1912.

Having come in fairly early from shooting, I will recommence my diary of events now from when I left off, which I think was on the Jhelum River bank, all of us in full feather, and fearing the threatening rain would spoil them. Having gone through the usual introductions and inspection, we all, Kashmiri and English, boarded a two-decker barge, with some thirty rowers ahead of the house part and as many again aft.

Within we sat Durbar fashion, Viceroy, Lord H. and the little Maharajah (little in size, not in age) at the top, all of us down one side, and all the Kashmir people on the other. After ten minutes of this we went up to the deck above, so that we could see Srinagar as we passed up its main water thoroughfare, and the people, in crowds on the bank, in boats, or in their houses, could see the procession. For, instead of the

usual procession of carriages, we had here a most picturesque one in boats of all sizes and shapes. The pity of it was the weather—cold and drizzly, and Kashmir, of all places in the world, needs, I fancy, sunshine to show itself off. Half-way in our progress we came across a human “Welcome” stretched across the river on a cable—Tyndal Biscoe’s, the remarkable C.M.S. man, schoolboys they were, and it was a pretty gymnastic feat. After we had passed the letters quickened into life and dived and jumped into the icy Jhelum—the distance being at least thirty feet—much to the amusement and joy of all Kashmir and ourselves, who watched the performance. The river cuts Srinagar in two, and the parts are connected by wonderfully picturesque wooden pile bridges, none of them quite on any one pattern.

The voyage up the river took about an hour, and it should have terminated at the Residency, but fortunately this was considered too long, and we did the last two miles by carriage.

Then came the ceremony of “Mizaj Pursi,” the inquiry by the host (H. H. of Kashmir) concerning H. E.’s health made through a deputation of four high state officials. As the host always meets the Viceroy on his arrival and escorts him to his residence, you may think the inquiry half an hour later is somewhat unnecessary. If so, I agree with you, especially as I have to remain in my tunic this period of time longer, it being the Foreign Secretary’s and my lot to meet the inquirers and assure them of H. E.’s sound health. Then followed a speciality of Kashmir’s own. Upon the lawn were spread about half an acre of comestibles all arranged in blocks—a gigantic one for the Viceroy, then three of the same size for the foreign, private, and military secretaries, and four more for surgeon and three

A.D.C.'s. Honey, grapes, fruit, vegetables and so forth were in the bag, but the only useful item was Rs.5000, which custom directs shall be remitted. Having heard that on the last Viceregal visit our servants and chuprassis carried off the swag (not the cash part of it), and sold it by auction to people at the Residency gates, I arranged this time to have it all carefully collected and distributed by a proper agency to the poor ; much I fancy to the chagrin of our greedy varlets, but much, I was glad to hear later, to the satisfaction of the State authorities, as the Resident was a little anxious how they would take it.

Next day was another busy one. A civilian, an A.D.C., and myself began it before 10 a.m. by going to the Palace by motor as a deputation to inquire after H. H.'s health, and to escort him to the Residency on his ceremonial visit to the Viceroy. This entailed a journey by water, for all State functions are carried out on the Jhelum as a road. It was still cloudy and very cold, so the long hour's voyage was not altogether enjoyable.

Having paid the usual visit, the Maharajah returned by water, and half an hour later the Viceroy and staff took ship to call at the Palace. Half-way there we were met by the Maharajah's fleet, and were boarded by him and escorted to the Palace. The latter, instead of being a dream of beauty, as it ought to be on such a river, is a nightmare of ugliness, and isn't worth describing. We returned part of the way only, and happily by water, the rest by carriage. After lunch a garden party filled the afternoon. Immediately after the party dress for the State banquet, and down in State boats again to the Palace. We very nearly persuaded the Resident to let us drive by road, as it was drizzling, but he was firm, and by boat we went again. The State banquet was



long and nasty, and ended by fireworks on the river, and so home to bed by a late midnight.

Next day, Sunday, broke clear and lovely. Church and museum for some, work, and much of it, for two or three others. In the afternoon we visited the C.M.S. school, started and run by a remarkable parson, called Tyndal Biscoe, already mentioned. He started in Srinagar some eighteen or twenty years ago as a junior master or assistant direct from Cambridge. To tell you even a fraction of his work would make a long letter, but his chief object or motive is to make that very mild specimen of humanity, the Kashmiri, a man. The school motto is, "In all things be men," and that is the tone of everything at the institution. Curiously enough one saw how this motto has permeated, or, at any rate, superficially reached the numerous other schools of Srinagar (all of them deadly jealous of and hating Biscoe's), for during the State progress up the river there were blocks of boys all along the banks, and their mottoes, displayed on flags, all had varieties of Biscoe's, such as "Character counts," "Be manly," and so on.

Biscoe has 1300 boys—boys of any persuasion of religion, but the large proportion of them Brahmins, to whom practically anything manly is anathema or forbidden. Rowing—now the great sport of the river—was of course absolutely barred to a Brahmin, who was far too high a caste creature to pull a boat. But I can't go on giving examples, as I would like to do, to show what lengths Brahmins will now go to. Boards hung up in the school show the names of boys who have *given* their lives for others; boys who have risked their lives to save others (from drowning, except under particularly dangerous circumstances, hardly ever counts, as it is considered too

ordinary !). Some of the lists are the rescue of cholera patients. Then he has a board for the pluckiest act of the year. Another shows the number of boys who have swum across the Dhal Lake—three miles; and 110 did this swim this year, while a dozen are posted as having swum the Woolar Lake, which is over six miles. I did not ask him, but I was told this unpretentious, ordinary-looking little man has done the Woolar Lake himself, as he never asks his boys to do anything he doesn't do himself. When a class is a failure, or doesn't know certain things it ought, or isn't up to the standard, Biscoe punished the schoolmaster.

He retains all his influence over "old boys," and they not only continue to work for the poor, the widows, and the sick, but if they fail in their public lives he punishes. A few days before we were there, an old boy, who had been a year or two in the State service, was dishonest and came to the school to apologise to Biscoe. One story says Biscoe thrashed him himself, the other that he handed him over to the school, and they did the necessary business !

An amusing feature at the school we saw was the way they turn out every day for the first lot of work on hand. At the beat of a gong an earthquake is supposed to take place, and the school buildings to be tottering, or, at any rate, a place to be vacated with the least possible delay. Bang went the gong, and in a moment swarms of boys appeared diving out of windows, verandahs, and so on, and sliding down poles which are fixed to the houses. The whole mob were out in the square in much less time than it takes to describe the operation.

On Monday we were out six miles on the celebrated Hokrar Lake by 10 a.m. to shoot duck,

teal, and geese. Duck were not fairly in yet, but about twelve guns bagged about 700 birds. I had a jolly swollen right cheek by the time I had finished firing 400 cartridges—just under seventy birds only falling to them.

Next day we motored to camp, taking two wonderfully lovely Mogul gardens *en route*. Allowed to deteriorate and run to ruin for the last two or three centuries, the Maharajah was persuaded to spend Rs.20,000 on them for their restoration before the Viceroy came, and thus they are now, one of them at least, the most beautiful, I think, I have ever seen. Running up a steep slope from a lake, the garden is bisected by a water channel some yards wide. Every 200 yards or so the water falls over a slope. On each side of the water is grass, and thirty inches away from the channel on each side is a row of that most lovely species of Kashmir tree—the chinar. As a background rising close behind the top of the garden is a rugged mass of mountain, about 2000 feet high (above garden level). The foreground is the lake, the Srinagar fort, and away beyond masses of snow mountains. The second garden wasn't quite so lovely. Then we passed the trout hatcheries, whence they get and put down annually a million trout eggs in the streams about Srinagar. The breeding trout run to an enormous size, and are graded in different tanks according to their size. The first has babies of a few ounces; the last has monsters of over twelve pounds!

I spent a happy ten minutes trying to lift out by the tail trout of the ten-pound series (they were cooped up at the end by a net so that we could see them). Everybody betted I couldn't do it; but I got two out of the water, to the immense delight of the little Maharajah.

Then on to Harum camp, where the Viceroy, one Joe Phelps, who is in charge of the State game preserves, and I shed the whole party, and going on four miles reached a little hut up the "nullah" where the Viceroy was to stalk.

Stags were "roaring" quite near the road, and the Viceroy had an hour's stalk after one on the way to the hut. Then followed three days' hard work, the Viceroy going one way and I another.

Needless to say his was the easy way, and the way in which large stag seemed to lurk behind every bush. He got two the first day, one a perfect "royal," and a fair size. Next day, without ever going off the path up the mountain cut for him, he shot two before being out an hour, and the third day he got a bear and missed a stag. He is an undoubtedly very good shot with a rifle.

I had three very hard days, and bagged a small stag by my shikaris' ill-behaviour the first day, killed a very fine stag the second, and drew blank the third day, though on this last day I could have killed a fairly good one, but met him on the road and on the flat, which seemed to be the wrong place for sport.

Yesterday we had a thing I hate in sport (except for birds), viz. a "drive." We were to have had four days of this performance, two here and two at the next camp, but fortunately managed to reduce it to one at each, and that will more than "feed up" everybody I think. Yesterday's drive was a wonderful "bandobust," for something like 3000 beaters were on the hill side keeping line over a front of about one and a half miles, and climbing straight 2000 feet up most difficult country.

The result as regards game in the first drive was one stag—three, I am glad to say, got back through the line. The next drive after lunch was

nearly as tedious, and the only result one bear. So for twelve rifles sitting in machans for about seven hours the day's sport was not very grand, and so much the better for that. Shooting at frightened driven animals doesn't seem to me to fulfil the highest ethics of sport. In the first place, one isn't doing anything oneself for one's sport; and, secondly, animals usually come out at a great pace, and therefore offer a very difficult target, and are therefore more likely to be wounded or maimed than in the case when they are deliberately and most carefully stalked till a deadly shot is practically a certainty; thirdly, there is no time to see whether an animal is big or small, worth shooting or not—up goes the rifle without reflection or mercy.

Viceroy's Camp,  
India.

Begun October 31st, 1912.

After that we came on to Mona, where there is a big remount depot of about 1000 country-bred horses. This in its way is a wonderful enterprise, for where nine years ago there was a barren waste of thorn bush, there is now 10,000 acres of paddock land and land under oats, lucerne, and other crops; avenues, miles in length, of trees, huge haystacks everywhere, and prosperity oozing from every pore. Horses are not bred here—that never pays Government. But the Zemindars of the country side have mostly been given land on condition that they each keep a mare for breeding purposes, and Government supplies the sires. Then when young stock are foaled and are about one to one and a half years old, the remount people buy them if they satisfy the very severe tests of measurements they apply.

From the time of their purchase until issued to

regiments at four and a half or five years old, the youngsters live in the remount depot, all of the same age mobbed together. And so you see first the young colts and fillies just purchased, then in another paddock there are 100 or 200 two-year-olds, in another three-year-olds, and yet again four-year-olds, all in different stages of development. Such jolly things they are, quiet and friendly to a degree, and curious; for as you sit on your horse looking at a mob of 150 or so, round they all come sniffing at you, your horse, your boots, or anything, one is struck with the difference between this sort of animal arriving at a regiment now to what was the case before this system came in. In those days a white man's sight or smell was enough to frighten a country-bred horse into the greatest fear or viciousness. And the same good systems of kindly treatment taught at the Government remount depots and at the many Native Cavalry horse farms has percolated to the Zemindar: for he, too, no doubt under the advice of the "circle officer," has his babies tame and quiet.

The "circle officer" is a remount officer specially detailed to a huge district to administer the breeding operations; and he tours about seeing how the people keep their mares and foals, advising them as necessary how to treat them, how to improve the stock next time, and so on.

It was a jolly evening well spent. Now to bed, as it is very late, and have a 7 a.m. start to-morrow.

*November 2nd.*—We began work duly at 7 a.m. yesterday, and only knocked off at 6 p.m., after a very jolly day, and I think profitable, as it sharpened the Viceroy's interest still further in the ex-soldier man, and further increased his knowledge of the great work of horse-breeding the

army remount department is doing. We saw some beautiful remounts, and a magnificent parade of English, Arab, and Australian sires. Huntly Gordon, of my regiment, is what is called "circle officer" of the Sargodha circle, and it is his business to advise the Zemindar (farmer) as to the care of his mare and foal, the best sire to wed her to, and so forth. I don't know what his area's extent is, but it is large enough to keep him in camp, I believe, every day in the year. The circle officer of this place (Lyalpur, which we reached this morning) has a little tract of country extending to 10,000 *square miles*, and he works it thoroughly and with great results. Being in close touch with the people, he is a little king in his own way, and many of them look to him to decide points when opinions differ in all things concerning horses, and in a great many others. In the afternoon, after a hurried lunch, we attended a Durbar at which several hundred fine old be-medalled pensioned Native officers turned up.

After the Durbar, changed and went down to the sports—tent pegging, "Pit Kandi," a sort of running-wrestling game, very popular with Indian athletes and acrobats—after which train, and away to this place. Sargodha (concerning which above has to do) crawls with Eighteenth Lancers, and I was properly mobbed by old friends, and could do nothing less than pass on some of the infliction to the Viceroy, who had to submit to a personal introduction to each one of them. I forgot to mention that we began our day by motoring along the canal bank to Malik Khuda Buksh's "chak" (as allotments of land in these colonies are termed). He has no horses there, but has a great camp. Hordes of wild-looking horsemen and people on foot and camel (usually three or four of a family on the latter) lined about

half a mile of the road to his encampment. Arrived in time for Chota Hazri No. 2—the first being on the train. Then after some polite conversation we inspected his very fine stud of horses, and that over we passed on to fulfil our obligation to his rival Malik, Amar Hazel, who has extensive lands adjacent. He, not to be outdone by his rivals, had built a house in six weeks to entertain his Viceregal guest, and thereby wiped his neighbour's sorrowing eye. He had also imported from his older place (Kubar) and the countryside a much greater following of horsemen and camelmen, while at least three bands of local musicians made life inaudible with their din.

Within the house that Amar built we were regaled with Chota Hazri No. 3 of tea and fruit. Thereafter the strong man I saw in Simla was produced and gave us proof that his chest was no ordinary one. A country bullock cart, loaded with ten hearty yokels, was pulled over him without even a cough escaping him. The first attempt nearly ended in his sudden demise, for instead of the wheel passing over his prostrate body, it *pushed* him along, and getting him at an angle all but ran over his head. Hindu and Mohammedan dances were next provided, and a rare din they both made. Then we passed on and breakfasted at the remount depot.

November 4th, Delhi.

Life is cheap in this country. Going through a new portion of the Circuit House (in time to be called "Viceregal Lodge") I found a room being dried by the ordinary process of burning charcoal on a pan set in the middle of it. Three men were in it—one quite alive, having accidentally come in, I think, to look for his friends, one moribund, and one stone dead from asphyxiation. When I first



went in I noticed nothing except what I thought was a man sleeping and another being wakened by the live man, but feeling the fumes pretty strong it just occurred to me that something might be wrong, and so had a look round at the sleepy ones—with the above results.

To-day we went off to new Delhi site, and inspected four for Government House; none of them included that selected by the "experts," but I think that which we favoured will take a deal of knocking out. It is well away from the ridge (half a mile at least), and it is just a knoll or hillock of solid rock with a command of forty to fifty feet above the ordinary plain level, and just about large enough to hold Government House.

Viceregal Lodge, Delhi,  
December 23rd, 1912.

MY DEAREST CHAR—

The State entry was somewhat of a failure, as you will be realising about now from the evening papers, unless you have reached Guildford, in which case you will possibly be rather perturbed by old Phil's telegram, saying that *I* was all right. As long before this reaches you, you will have heard most details, and particularly as to the Viceroy's health. I can only tell you of what I know of it. I have just sent the Press and Reuter a summary, so it will be more or less an amplification of what you will see to-day or to-morrow.

We arrived at Delhi at 11 a.m., and after the business at the station, formed the procession and started off on elephants, the Viceroy and Lady H. on a huge one with two men sitting behind them holding the umbrella. Some thirty or forty yards behind their elephant was the Lt.-Governor and Lady Dane; ten yards in front, a pair of elephants with Du Boulay and Sir H. McMahon

on one, Diamond, Sir Afsar-ul-Mulk, and I on the other. Shortly after leaving the Town Hall and entering the Chandni Chowk there was a tremendous report, and looking back I saw a cloud of smoke, the Viceroy with his hat off, and the umbrella falling on one side. It seemed uncommon like a bomb, but the Viceroy was ordering the procession to go on, so it was hard to make anything of it. Then Lady H. beckoned to me, and I shinned down my elephant somehow and round to theirs. She said the procession couldn't go on, as there was a dead man on the elephant. I could see the Viceroy was looking pretty bad, and running round behind, found one of the attendants hanging by his legs head downwards over the back of the elephant, and precious little left of him there was. Getting the elephant down, we got Lady H. off and disentangled the poor fellow behind and got him clear. Then Roberts\* and I got to the Viceroy and had a look round. He was lying back on the shattered howdah looking very sick, a lot of blood on his neck; then propping him up we found all his coat torn behind with a big wound inside of it.

*Later, 24th.*—However, we could not, of course, turn him over where he was nor move him at all for a bit, as Roberts thought it was a pretty bad business, in fact, believed he was going to "peg out" for a minute or two. Then we had to consider means of getting the Viceroy down off the elephant, which was a gigantic one, and even when sitting was at least twelve feet or more above ground level. At length, with the greatest possible difficulty, we removed him by making a platform of packing cases, and with further difficulty carried him into a very small motor which was produced from somewhere. Roberts and I went

\* Sir James Roberts, I.M.S. Surgeon to the Viceroy:

with him, and I had to hold him pretty tight in my arms on the back seat while Roberts gave him brandy from the front, as he fainted again.

All this took, I suppose, from half to three-quarters of an hour, during which the procession halted; but no one in front, and few in rear, realised what had happened, which perhaps was lucky, as it just left our Staff to deal with the situation as it affected the Viceroy, and prevented a crowd of people assembling to help. Lady Hardinge sat on a chair in the Chowk, looking pretty bad, but as brave as a lion, not fainting or doing anything troublesome, such as insisting on being in the motor, etc. She was afraid, poor thing, all the time that the Viceroy was going to die—her mind travelling back to others who had suddenly expired after apparently being only slightly hurt. The Viceroy, though unconscious only for a minute or so, was more or less so all the time; but whenever he did speak, said he wanted to go on to the Fort, as he was all right and could carry the business through, which was quite what one expects from an Englishman, as one does of the Englishwoman on such occasions. He was able, however, to order that Fleetwood Wilson\* should carry on his functions; so after we had got him into the car and were taking him to the Circuit House, the whole procession, including all our Staff except three, went to the Fort.

It was Louis Dane's (Lt.-Governor's) business to open the proceedings then, and they say that he rose to the occasion magnificently, and made a most stirring and almost fighting extemporaneous prelude to his prepared speech. He said that we knew how to take retribution fifty years ago for acts of what he might almost term sacrilege, and that we still had the power of memory.

\* Rt. Hon. Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson, G.C.I.E., the senior Member of Council present.

Having got the Viceroy safely into bed, I went off to the Fort to tell Sir Fleetwood, who had taken the Viceroy's place, that the latter was "doing well." . . .

I pushed our unwilling guests and the Staff out to see the fireworks, sending a large party of them in the coach to make a splash and show that the Viceroy's lot were there. Poor Phil was swept in also. None of the chiefs, except old Kashmir, who was dragged there by Fraser (Resident), would go there, but had a meeting in Patiala's camp, at which they "resolved" many things.

Gwalior,  
April 3rd, 1914.

. . . We, or rather perhaps I, had rather an exciting day to-day, after three blank days previously.

We had to go forty miles through the jungle on a more or less kutcha (unmade) road, which landed us near a river bed, which like all about here are, except for pools here and there, dry and covered with thick patches of jungle. The Viceroy and all the others went to their towers as usual, and I to the beat, also as usual, as I hate towers.

Well, we started off and beat up the river bed, and came out opposite the Viceroy's machan empty handed, *i.e.* with no tiger in front of us. Men, however, posted in trees on the cliff bounding one side of the river, said they had seen the tiger. So the line was taken nearly all the way back again. Being sceptical, however, I seized a howdah elephant which was doing nothing, and got on her with the Maharajah's English chauffeur (a frequent comrade of mine in the beat, and a capital little sportsman) and waited for the beat to reform and come up to where we were—about half-way between the beat and the Viceroy's place.

After a long time the line advanced, and almost immediately the tiger got up from a spot which must have been close to us and passed thirty yards from us, going forward—as she was meant to. On the arrival of the beat I took my raw and shy young elephant to the thickest part of the jungle and walked ahead of the line.

After a quarter of a mile there was a pause, as the ground was very difficult and jungle very thick. Suddenly there was a roar to my rear, and I saw tiger lying full stretch on a man. She was thirty yards from me; but as I could see no man, as he was completely covered by the animal, I let fly, with the fortunate result<sup>+</sup> that she left him immediately, though quite probably unhit. The man is all right, and after having his wounds dressed was standing about.

The above showed that the tiger was not going forward to the machans, which means she had been fired at and probably hit from them at some earlier occasions; it also meant that she would face a man and charge back through the line, if she could, and was therefore a very dangerous beast.

By this time my elephant was very alarmed, so I called up another noted for his staunchness, and with Gatehouse (the chauffeur) changed on to him, telling the two native swells (officials of the State) to climb on to the frightened one and go and fetch our doctor, who was away on our flank.

I was very intent all the time on the nullah close by, in case tiger moved again, so didn't see that my request had not been followed till too late, and then discovered they had stayed in the howdah (which held two in front and two with a fearful squash behind). However, it was too late then, as we had to get to work, and weren't long

in coming to business, for, thrusting into the thick stuff, there was a roar and a charge. I fired at all I could see, and the charge stopped within six or seven feet, and the charger disappeared.

This happened three times, I think, and I fired five shots altogether. Then, after the third charge, we were mugging about in desperate thick stuff, when we heard three or four shots forward from the Viceroy's tower. Thank goodness, said I, they will have finished her off; when hardly were the words out of my mouth, the tiger was on the elephant's trunk. I leant over and fired my last cartridge into her back, Gatehouse let off his weapon too, and then the elephant's foot slipped or something and he fell on his side, first half over, then clean over, so that the four of us were decanted on to the ground. I caught one of our Indian friends just before he sped away and bagged his rifle (which I had previously told him to keep ready for me), but—it was empty! t'other friend had gone, and Gatehouse's rifle was out of action, the elephant still on his side, *but* with apparently one foreleg and his trunk over the tiger.

Anyhow, there was nothing of him to be seen, and nothing to shoot at him with, if there had been!

"Off, Gatehouse," I said, and together we hooked it like lamp-lighters to the Viceroy's tower.

By the time we arrived there the elephant had let go the tiger and got out of the nullah, the mahout again on his back. Where this plucky fellow had gone after the elephant was upset, I don't know. He wasn't on his ship when I evacuated it so fleetly, but must have been hard by to so quickly have been on his back again. During the first struggle he was there all right, and his toes must have been almost in the tiger's mouth!

Borrowing one of the Viceroy's rifles, I went

back again by a circuitous route to the battleground, and got on the elephant, who was recovering his splendid courage again, and was shown the exact spot where the elephant-men said the tiger was lying (twelve yards off). But I couldn't see it; no more could they, except in imagination, because she wasn't there. So we pushed on a bit, and then I spotted her, quite dead, within a few yards of the struggle. She had six if not seven huge wounds in her, so she was a fine fighter.

Altogether it was a very exciting episode, and showed what a magnificent creature a tiger is when properly roused. . . .

Gwalior,  
April 24th, 1915.

I went out at 6 p.m. to sit over a panther kill—not a job I care for, as it has little element of sport in it. I had some way to go, with the poor little goat as victim bleating behind on the back of an elephant part of the way. Then, very unwilling to leave its home further behind, he was carried by a man, still badly protesting.

Arrived at the spot where leopard had killed the night before, I climbed into my machan, while goat was tied up in the river bed below.

Much bleating for about ten minutes, enough to summon all the leopard in the district. Then he wisely got tired and sat down, which means perfect safety, as leopard won't kill an animal unless standing.

Meanwhile the quarry was quite close by, uttering his queer sort of growl, and remained about for three-quarters of an hour. At about 8 he had gone, the goat was asleep, showing no sign of getting up and playing the bait, so I came down from my uncomfortable perch, and still



F. A. M. WITH HIS CHILDREN, 1914.





more uncomfortable conscience. And how glad was the goat to see a human being again, and though it was a white one, had nothing but grateful nosings at my hand, as I released its picketing rope.

Then gathering up my belongings, off we, goat and I, trudged in the dark homewards, only satisfied little bleats going on from my companion as we tramped along the jungle path.

So long as it was light I had hoped to kill the leopard before he reached the goat—that was the one element of sport (for me—possibly a different word for the goat). But when darkness fell it was just murder, and then the life of the murderer. I must say I hated it.

## CHAPTER V

FRANCE, MAY TO OCTOBER, 1916

FROM May, 1916, to September, 1917, Frank Maxwell was continuously on active service in France, with only a few intervals of ten days' leave. While away from Mrs. Maxwell he wrote to her every day, no matter what stress of work or danger he was enduring. The volume of the letters alone, therefore, makes it impossible to publish more than extracts, and these have been selected to throw light on his character, rather than his adventures. If the passages given seem sometimes too much curtailed, it must be remembered that the letters were written to Mrs. Maxwell, and intended for her eye alone, so that there is much in them which cannot be published.

May 14th, 1916.

. . . On arrival I found that I am to command a battalion,\* which all seem to think is the best thing for me. Personally, I feel much diffidence, having been trained as a Cavalry and a Staff officer. However, they say I need not be diffident; and anyhow, Sir D. Haig having "approved" of the proposal, I am for it, whether I like it or not. Congreve† commands the Corps, and Jimmy Shea‡ is about to command the Division, while Bob

\* 12th Battalion Middlesex Regiment.

† Lieut.-Gen. Sir W. Congreve, V.C., Commanding XIII. Corps.

‡ Major-Gen. Sir J. S. Shea.

Greenly\* is the Chief Staff Officer of the Corps, so I shall be amongst friends—if far removed from them. . . .

May 19th, 1916.

. . . Had a long day out, and very interesting, watching bombing, sniping, scouting, etc. I am wondering how I am going to assimilate all the knowledge and information I am picking up. Warfare these days is a mass of minute detail, in which everybody practically is a specialist of some sort. Big things don't percolate down to a battalion, and the big things themselves are, compared to open warfare, mere trivial events concerning a matter of yards. Their largeness is only connected with the number of men, the masses of whom are all employed in the end to effect a trivial detail—that is, it is trivial if compared to the great events of open war. . . .

May 20th, 1916.

. . . I still think it is curious to turn a trained Staff officer into a job he has never seen. Possibly his military education enables him to pick up the job quicker than some others; but why learn a new one, when, by the nature of things, your Staff training, which is probably more wanted, is immediately available. However, I have no grouse personally, because in the job I have, or shall have, it is *command* of men, which is infinitely preferable to anything else, and more useful to one *personally*. . . .

May 21st, 1916.

. . . This morning we went to a church parade of two of his† battalions—one of which is commanded by Toby Long of the Greys, the other by

\* Major-Gen. W. H. Greenly.

† Major-Gen. Sir T. Bridges, K.C.M.G.

Worgan, 20th Deccan Horse. I think he has another couple of battalions commanded by Cavalry men.

The service was in a field, overlooking the quiet little village buried in its blossomed chestnuts. The Padre was an Irishman with a good voice. There was a band collected from musicians throughout the Division, and all the men sang. So it was about as good a thing of its sort as I have ever been to. There is something always that impresses one when a large number of people join in in a service. *All these* 1500 or 1600 men joined in in the prayers and hymns. For the sermon, a good one, we sat down on the grass. T. B. is in great form—getting grey about his curly head, but a fine figure of a man, and quite the right sort and age to command a Division. . . .

May 21st, 1916.

. . . I am very fortunate to have been sent to so good a Corps, my only misfortune being that they will not be in the actual trenches when I go up with them, for I should like to see its methods there. We go to a couple of miles behind the front line, as at present arranged, and while I shall be able to go to the trenches and see things run by some other battalion, it will not be with the same freedom, or with the knowledge that what I see is probably the best way to do it, as would have been the case with the Norfolks. . . .

May 22nd, 1916. .

. . . Rachel's and Violet's signatures and X X and the small ones for the Germans were great ; but tell Violet I shall never kiss a German, even at her bidding ! How good it is to hear of the sea and dissipations of paddling, the biggest of my three actually doing so, to see if it were warm

enough for the two smaller. With a week of this kind of weather I don't think even your careful thought will be equal to keeping the babies out of the sea.

Last night after dinner we had an informal concert outside, which went to show how much talent there is in these new army regiments. One of the singers is the leading tenor in Norwich Cathedral, with a really beautiful voice and knowledge how to use it. Then we had a pair of men who sang a duet extremely well, both having good voices. Anon a really comic man off some travelling show. And so it went on, most of it ordinary, perhaps, but all many times better in class and style to ordinary T. Atkins' performances, and no broadness! These Norfolk men are great singers, and the choruses are sweet and mellow, so that it is a pleasure to hear them. . . .

May 27th, 1916.

. . . As to your feelings concerning the contrast of our lives, if there is anything in it at all, it just means that your comfort of body and surroundings makes for my comfort of mind. Just suppose if I had, like I fear so many have, to leave you behind pinched and in poor circumstances, what would my lot be then? Willy nilly, I should devote much of my mind to planning or worrying how to ease your lot, instead of being free to give it all to my country. And, after all, what are the discomforts you talk of? Nothing to a soldier man who is interested in his job—they are mere incidents and mostly forgotten as soon as past. . . .

May 30th, 1916.

. . . Lincoln & Bennett write that my helmet has been despatched, but I shall stick to the one

I have borrowed until it comes, as I shall be up in the trenches pretty often. De Lisle is right with his order. The same exists here, but it is not obeyed by a certain proportion of officers. Which reminds me of a score I had off an old pal in my old regiment (Sussex), who commands a new army Sussex battalion in this vicinity. Knowing he was about, I spotted him walking along, so shouted out to him in a very commanding voice: "Hi, you, officer; what are you doing without your trench helmet on? Come here, please!" So come he did, looking very uncomfortable up to within a few yards, where a deep trench stopped him. Then he began to make excuses, etc., which having heard, I shied mud at him, and loping the trench, smote him on the bosom, when only he spotted who I was. We haven't met for years.

No luxuries required at present, dear, like cakes, etc. Perhaps later an occasional "treat" will be very acceptable, but I think there is an inclination to overdo this sort of thing in this war. Certainly the Norfolks are full of cake, shortbread, and such-like things, imported by the men from Fortnum & Mason. When I have sampled my new mess I will reconsider the position. . . .

12th Middlesex Regiment,  
B.E.F.,

June 2nd, 1916.

Had a strenuous day so far—4.15 p.m. Up at 6.30, breakfast 8, work again till 10.15, when I talked. I meant only to see officers and N.C.O.'s; but as what I had to say concerned the whole regiment, and would not, I know, reach it through officers and N.C.O.'s, I changed my mind, and had the battalion out. As soon as, with much

precision, they had formed up, I told them to break off and get as close round me as possible, sit down and smoke, and listen. I began by saying that I liked this sort of way of seeing and speaking to the regiment when I had something to say that concerned them all. Oftener it has to be through regimental orders, or through officers and N.C.O.'s, but when we can be a family, we'll be one and talk to each other as one.

Then I said I was new to them, and as most of them didn't know my handsome face, I took off my hat and told them to have a good look at it. This immense jest was enormously appreciated, and after that we were on great terms, and I am ashamed to say I stood there in the middle of that 800-900 men, alternately grave and laughing at what I had to say, for over three-quarters of an hour. I don't suppose you knew I had the gift of this sort of gab; but I must have, and shall, no doubt, appear in Hyde Park the first Sunday I get home.

When in full flight about the fighting spirit, which I said meant you wanted to kill a German so much that you felt you could eat him after it, I looked round to see the Padre standing amongst the officers. I begged his pardon, told him he'd have his turn next Sunday (if we weren't digging), and carried on to worse. Afterwards I spoke to him, and was surprised to hear him say he agreed with all I said. One of the lessons of Christianity was to do your task well and thoroughly, and if, as undoubtedly it was, it were the soldiers' task to kill, then he must be in earnest about it, and kill and want to kill as thoroughly as I insisted. He is a good sort of Padre, I think, but complains that the men aren't much good at Church Parade—won't sing or open their mouths. But I think I shall find a remedy for this, when we



indulge in a service, and make him happy in that respect. . . .

June 3rd, 1916.

. . . In Armies there are two forms of major punishments, called Field Punishment, No. 1, and ditto No. 2. The first consists of, among other penalties, the tying of the man up to a limber wheel, or anything else for two hours a day. A most vile form of punishment, to my brand of mind, as it is shameful and lowers a man's self-respect. So I told the battalion yesterday that I intended never to give this form of punishment, and would only do so when I thought a man had no self-respect to lose and was on the downhill road to court-martial. To-day I found, when walking round the camp, three men tied up, working through a month each of sentences passed by my predecessors. I had nothing, of course, to do with the punishments or the crimes they were given for, and have not, even if I wished, the power to mitigate or reduce them. Nor have I the slightest authority or power to do what I did do, which was to have them all three unlashd, after I had spoken to each, and told them why I was not going to have them lashed up any more, but would take it out of them in other ways. It really almost made me cry to see the first man, a great fine creature, with his arms out as if tied to a crucifix, and I told him so, and that I could see by his face that he had self-respect and might lose it if this went on for many more weeks (he had fifty days to do altogether, for a bad offence); but I don't think he will go wrong again any the quicker for being let off this vile punishment. The other two were not such bright specimens to look at, but both committed faults which a one-and-a-half years' soldier, with discipline, naturally of a

different kind to a regular regiment, might easily commit without being a bad 'un. Anyhow, I quite expect them not to let me down, and shall be surprised if, when their sentences are finished, either of them ever comes before me again. If they do, I told them it would be court-martial and *shooting*, if I could arrange it conveniently ! . . .

June 5th, 1916.

. . . Rum fellows, soldiers. Out of my tent door I see about 300 men waiting in a queue for a mug—not much better than a big breakfast cup in size—of beer, for which they have to pay five good pence. French beer at 3*d.*, and quite good at that, is no use to them at all, and it is English beer they want, or practically nothing. Not much teetotalling in my crowd, at least 500 drinking as much beer as I will allow them—a very meagre three-quarters of a pint. They had none till four days ago, nor any dry canteen—grocery things, tobacco, etc. I suppose because nobody troubled to think about their little wants. That has been the bother, I fancy, and I have been down on the officers to-day for that. . . .

June 7th, 1916.

. . . I have just heard the appalling news of K.'s drowning, and all his staff. It seems incredible, but I hear it is official. I felt uneasy when I heard the rumour first in the trenches this morning, because of my knowledge that he would be at sea.

A dreadful calamity for the Nation, and one turns over in one's mind in vain to discover a man capable of filling his place in the Empire, with his power and adequacy. No doubt there is a man somewhere, if we can but find him—but shall we ?

And then, who were included in "all his staff"? Was Robertson with him? One feels almost certainly that he must have been. And then poor old Fitz. It is all too sad to write about, and one must look ahead and not back always, and not let regrets and unhappiness and sense of loss lead us to anything but more hope and more vigorous action and determination. . . .

June 8th, 1916.

. . . This morning I was out riding early for air and exercise, and my groom was following me out later on the other horse. A good deal of German shelling was going on over our camp, to the road 500 yards beyond, but wasn't doing much harm to anything except the corn each side of the road. I had turned off a road at right angles, and was about 200 yards down it, when my groom with the other horse came along the shelled road, and spying me, cut off the corner and began to ride towards me over the crops. As this is a rotten thing to do at any time, I shouted to him to go back and come to me by the road; and this agricultural solicitude saved him his life, for he had hardly turned on to the road when a shell fell exactly where he would have been. As it was, he was covered with mud and earth the hefty missile threw out of its ten-foot wide and four-foot deep crater. The new horse didn't much like it either, and I don't know how the two kept company, but they managed to. The groom was very scared, and hardly took in the lesson I rubbed into him about crops and shells. The horse unfortunately put the shell episode down to a motor lorry which was approaching them at the moment the shell fell, and not unnaturally, with the result that when I changed on to him he expected more

medicine of the same sort each time a lorry passed. . . .

June 14th, 1916.

. . . A long day yesterday, didn't finish again till close on midnight, and there is another one to-day full enough to keep us from absolute idleness. Jolly old bad weather continues, but like most things in life that we think are beastly and grouse about, it seems to do nobody the smallest harm, although it is always bitter cold, more like November than June.

Yesterday I startled the battalion by making it double about at the work we were at ; made it double on the way home ; made it, therefore, warm and hearty instead of wet and cold, for men necessarily have to hang about in their ranks while we officers are picking up mistakes in some scheme we are working out, and it is dull, besides being wet and cold for the men. . . .

June 20th, 1916.

. . . Last night we had a concert, but unfortunately the only room available—in the Hotel de Ville—was a small one, and only part of the regiment could squeeze in. And didn't they squeeze in ! Where 150 officers recently thought they were packed like sardines, more than 300 men got in last night, squatting on the ground. Entry was not by ticket ! so those for whom there was no room had to stay in the street, and among them the glee-singers of three companies, which was a pity. But we got two lots, one from a company and the other from the signallers.

It caught on tremendously, I am glad to say, and one party was first class. Next time we shall arrange that if space is limited again the other company people get in first. I gave prizes for the

event, but without that encouragement I think public opinion will see to it that glee-singers are worth having. Amongst the singers we had a really good bass, and a good baritone, also a good officer bass; the whistler again warbled between his teeth, and was a great success. A small speech at the end from O.C., which concluded with the suggestion that we should sing the "Anthem," so that the whole town should know we had a King, and should envy our vocal powers; and, Alleluiah! didn't the blessed roof nearly come off! Soldier men really love to hear their own voices, and having started they couldn't stop, and so carried on with "Cheers for the Colonel," and still wanting more vent to their lungs, followed that "For he's a jolly good fellow." Then, pouring downstairs, they left, still ringing the welkin with some chorus they all seemed to know, and didn't stop till they were well out in the street. . .

June 26th, 1916.

. . . In this place, at which we arrived last night about midnight, we live in dug-outs—elaborate affairs built by sappers for themselves in times gone by. The men are very crowded—which didn't matter last night, as it was fine; to-night it does, as it is very wet. I have a very fine hole, and wouldn't mind how long I lived in it. One samples a variety of dwellings these days—billets, tents, sheds in a wood, and now dug-outs. In time I have no doubt all these will be luxurious abodes, compared to bivouacking in rain without anything but what is on one's back!

June 27th, 1916.

. . . What a great and glorious life war would be, if one had no ties and love to make one look

behind, instead of in front, with a whole heart. In South Africa my only care was dear mother ; but then one knew she had six much better sons behind the seventh. Now I have three dear little things, which have a different claim on me, however indifferent I may be as a husband and father. It is a great life—war : of that there is no doubt, and I do love it. But it isn't quite the same thing to me as it was between 1895 and 1902 ; not, in fact, by a long chalk. And that is your fault—and you know it, and aren't a bit sorry for it either ! . . .

June 29th, 1916.

Taking over trenches is a laborious business, and we got through by about 1 a.m.—fortunately a fine night after a sopping day. G.'s fairly quiet, but landed a monster amongst a crowd of our people waiting to enter a trench, and hardly scratched one of them. A very noisy place this to live in ; underground mostly are my quarters, and every one of our guns which shoot over my trenches sounds as if it were fired into the window, while the rush of iron backwards and (mostly) forwards is like the passing of a continuous passage of express trains through a station. However, one gets quite accustomed to this sort of thing, and noise doesn't bother me in the least.

To-day I have been hard at it till 4 p.m. without stirring from my dug-out, working out a raid I have to make to-night. Very short notice, and over absolutely strange ground for my people. Still, I am glad to have the opportunity, and if it only works out successfully it will do them a power of good and buck them up. Yet one day scarcely gives me a chance of working out a good show for them, and I am wondering whether what I have evolved will be productive of anything. With a little luck

it may. I have gone in for a strong raid, and am sending over four officers and about 100 men with orders to *mob* the Germans—jump in on top of them and scupper all they can. The difficulty is the getting to them, for the distance is, for trench warfare, considerable, and has to be done by compass bearings, and the way may be easily lost. Then, if they got there, there may be no G.'s to kill or bring back. In these shows one has the run of a large group of guns, and you just tell them to fire here for so many minutes, "lift" to there for so many more, etc., and it is done, or tried to be done. Much too often, however, something goes wrong, and guns or infantry get tangled up in their plans, with the result that our infantry run into the fire of our guns, and have to come back for fear of being killed. I begged to be allowed to have my little jaunt without guns, so as to surprise Bosch, unwarned by artillery fire that something with a bayonet or bomb might follow, but was disallowed for certain good reasons.

However, I have my own means of having the guns by order, and using them in a way which will leave no chance for risk of failure, because of a muddle with them. I am now waiting for the raid to start. . . .

July 2nd, 1916.

. . . A battlefield in the old days, even though casualties were often far greater, must have been a clean, sweet business compared to one these days. The area over which it is fought is merely the face of God's lovely earth wrecked beyond recognition, except as a plague of volcanoes. Everything about the thing is unlovely and rather dreadful; and to those who are at all weak in stomach, very dreadful, and altogether unbearable. And there are a great many to whom, at any rate in cold

blood, it is intolerable. I have two officers, both shaken and now useless from mere sights, and I suppose there are plenty of men the same.

I had a very busy day, crowded with ingredients—such as acute anxiety for a period, ease of mind, and, finally, satisfaction, but was too occupied really to be worried or over-jubilant. Happily, I possess a temperament that seems immune from nerves or shocks to the system, and a man may be squandered over me without any more feeling about it than being sorry for his poor mother or wife—I mean, of course, it does not incapacitate my system in the least, and so stop mental activity. And for this there is much to be very grateful for, even if it does seem there may be something good missing in me. . . .

July 7th, 1916.

My yesterday's letter missed fire again, thanks to one of our very usual night peregrinations, and now in the mire of a bivouac I can't find the notebook in which it was written, ready for despatch, so must scribble to-day without more delay. Yours of 2nd and 3rd came in a short while ago, making up for a blank day yesterday—though I had one from Diamond. You were writing Sunday's letter (and Monday's too, I dare say) in well disguised anxiety of mind, poor little sweet; but I know jolly well all about it, even though you don't give away anything. My only anxiety is about yours, since I am not built to be anxious about nothing. It was a very strenuous time, and there are plenty more hard knocks to take and give—more of the latter—yet. Thank goodness, we made a bit of ground on our left to-day, a stubbornly held village giving way at last. On our front we still held the ground, and a bit more,



which we took this day last week, waiting till those on our left got level. The annoying part to me is that we could have shoved on, and could now, just anyhow we liked, but caution to the last degree is the order of the day. As a principle it is wise, but under the circumstances it is only one to be broken at the moment, and broken with the utmost vigour and force of which we are capable. The fact really is that this trench warfare is killing the normal military eye and interest for anything else, so that when the opportunity for normal or "open" warfare presents itself, as it has presented itself to part of our forces for some days, no one sees, or rather sees and jibs, across the road at it.

Presumptuous it may be for me to say this, but I am convinced that, still unsoaked with trench warfare, I can still retain the vision and instinct of the old game undimmed; perhaps rather more keenly even, after two months of bunnying underground, which has been enough to show how damnable it is, how necessary at most times, and how absolutely imperative to chuck it the moment one can. I give you a little instance. I held the furthestmost point of our penetration. Only one line of enemy trench in front of me, instead of dozens; a fine open country, enemy practically non-existent in front, being too much engaged with business near-by on flanks. My General proposed I should bomb up a trench, leading to the above enemy line—bomb up fifty or sixty yards! "What for?" "Oh, just to see if there's any Bosches there." "But," I replied, "I can go thousands of yards over the top and get you heaps of news. What's the use of fifty yards up a stinking trench?" "My dear chap, you seem to think that you have arrived at open warfare," was the General's answer. Mine in turn was certainly that I did so,

so far as my front was concerned. However, he was too saturated with trench warfare and couldn't see it. Nevertheless, I sat tight, didn't do any bombing, but arranged to send a patrol right away for the trench ahead, explore various other little items, and so home. I squared the artillery not to shoot in my direction, but unfortunately they got orders later to do certain shooting, and forgot to tell me. So off went my patrol at 10 p.m., stole up to the enemy trench about three-quarters of a mile away, found nobody there, as I knew they would not, and had got through nearly all the wire, when down came our artillery on their heads, and off they had to clear. Very sickening. And so all night the gunners, from two miles back (some still further) pounded away at the wires, and I daresay spent some £100 worth of shells on doing what fifty of my men would have done in half an hour, and done much more effectually under the circumstances. It also gave away our intention of being at these trenches pretty soon, and prevented Higher Authorities from learning for certain what my patrol would undoubtedly have told them—viz. that there were no Germans about this front. General not too pleased with me, I think, for attempting open warfare before himself, so the Higher Commands are still ignorant, I imagine. Were I this same Higher Command I should be in possession of all that nice ground (which will shortly be very nasty), and not only that, I should have had two divisions of cavalry on it, and beyond it, long before to-day; the only difficulty for the latter being the two miles of our and German trenches to cross before it reached my front line. But that, though considerable, is easily surmountable, and already waggons are moving over half, at least, of this deep system.

Some of my poor people did not get in to our bivouac, which is quite close behind the tangled trench system, till 6 a.m. I hung about hoping to help them in till 1.30, then gave it up and went to "bed." Rather hope for billets after our nine to ten days' trenching, fighting, and mucking about generally, but this was not to be, and we slept out through a fine night fortunately. But to-day is a real old beast, with quite the worst and heaviest rain we have had since I came out, and that's saying a good deal. However, it is as mild as can be, and so the rain and mud don't matter a bit, really. The regiment hopeless at bivouacking, and I have been strafing them all round, making them do better and showing them how.

Had two men up just now for absence without leave, which I am afraid means desertion and a miserable shooting thereafter. They failed to march with us as we left our training ground to come up to the battle area, and a week later "found" themselves at Boulogne. Fairly busy marching for men who had lost their way, and fairly straight going for home. Poor devils, I suppose it was cold feet, and they are going to lose their lives dishonourably now, instead of taking the chance of doing so honourably a week ago. Another man I had put under arrest for challenging about the one German who was on the front I have been jawing about. The man belonged to what is called a "blocking" party, *i.e.* was blocking passage down the same jolly trench which the General wanted me to reconnoitre up. Down came a German unarmed and alone, possibly to see some pal of his among the gruesome slain still lying about in that vicinity (killed by our artillery fire on the 1st). "Halt, who goes there?" shouts our silly idiot; on which Fritz, of course, turns and hooks it round a corner of the very tortuous trench.

No one thought this in the least odd behaviour, only, in fact, wondered why I had him arrested when I heard of his performance; nor a long battalion order, informing the regiment that the King pays us to kill Germans, not to warn them to clear out or they will get hurt. A new aspect, which I trust the regiment will appreciate. Anyway, the next man gets court-martialled, so the sooner he does appreciate it the better. . . .

July 12th, 1916.

. . . You ask how I got to my point of vantage,\* from which I was able to telephone back. Why, I just walked there! Not having been out here so long that I think the "top" is perdition, I find it a much more healthy and speedy way of travelling and seeing things than burrowing along trenches. I'm not sure, too, that it isn't infinitely safer, for the distant enemy artillery know exactly where our troops are in their late trenches, and can and do strafe them heavily all the time. While, therefore, I sat comfortably out in the open, I could see my poor people in their trenches being heavily punished. But the trench habit is a bad one, and very deeply bitten in, and will want a lot to eradicate. I hear again now that our excellent Brigadier is perfectly convinced that at the position we are expected to reach to-morrow we shall sit down and stay for the winter. I thought it was a jest, but his staff tell me it is not so—in fact, they came along to discuss the possibility with me as to anything else, just to

\* This refers to a previous letter, in which Maxwell told how he had sat out in front of his line and behind a German trench system, which was being attacked by the Division on his flank. His position enabled him to see weak points in the German position, which he telephoned back, thereby materially assisting our attack.

cheer themselves up, for they have heard me laugh at the continuation of real trench warfare. We ourselves are on the move to-night, or early to-morrow morning; but may we take our transport with us so far as we are going, in the first instance? Not much! It has to stay miles behind, so that if we are hustled into a fight we shall have no reserve of ammunition, and the men have to eat bully and biscuit, instead of cooked food from their "cookers," which is part of the regimental transport. Temporarily, we go into reserve, and to a place only within distant artillery fire; but, nevertheless, we must do without anything but what we stand in, and carry two days' food on us as well. Silly old mug faces, but I am hoping to persuade them to wiser methods, and that we shall yet be allowed to take something with us. . . .

July 15th, 1916.

No letter went to you yesterday, owing to the exigencies of "service," which I think you know must be pretty severe if they prevent me writing. And they were. But how come I to be writing on faultlessly white writing paper, while I sit in a scoop of a bank, mired and grubby and grimy beyond your ken; and how comes it that I am waiting for a dilatory few damp sticks to boil some rain water, taken from a shell-hole, so as to make me and others glow with a breakfast of chocolate? It's because I have a sweetheart at home, writing and sending me parcels on our engagement day. Both were as refreshing as anything I have had, for I had starved of news of you for two days (if not three), and of food for nearly twenty-four hours, save for a former box of your chocolate, which I had just time to begin on, with others, and then had to leave, and found none left on

return, plus a tin of bully I looted off a dead man, and shared with four others.

Don't like war! and shan't play any more, if present conditions continue much longer. Got yoked into this business the day I last wrote, the 13th, I think. Nothing much doing during day, except unpleasant shelling, which damaged us somewhat. But from 11 p.m. onwards kept busy for an attack on the Trônes Wood, which had been taken (more or less), lost and retaken, about three times or four. Finally, it had to be taken, and kept at all costs, for certain military reasons, which are now in progress, and the Northants and my regiment, under myself, were ordered to do it. Not a pleasant or easy job to take on, and be warned for at 2 a.m., and get across the open before daylight to edge of the wood, or be Maxim gunned out of existence. My regiment was to lead, but had already been scattered by various orders, so when I reached the starting point there were but two companies, so I had to put the Northamptons in front, and not wait for my people. We crossed just as dawn was breaking the half-mile of open to the wood, passing through a very thick enemy barrage of shell. (The edge of the wood we were aiming for was held by a battalion that had managed to stay in at the last attack.) We got over wonderfully well, and only one or two parties were blown away, which is wonderful. Men were very good and steady. On arrival at wood, my orders were for the battalion to halt on edge and reform; but the C.O. got muddled and didn't do this, and, consequently, hadn't a dog's chance of doing anything, except be killed just in the same way as other regiments had been for the same fault. Fortunately, I stopped mine inside, and kept them in hand; then waited for reports to come back from

Northants. None came, nor could come, as they were soon lost and broken up into small bodies, playing just the game the G.'s like, for it let them play their old game of firing at them from sideways and behind. Realising after a time that it was a case of another regiment gone for nothing, I had to beat round and get at the situation, and collect its remains, and with my own began to form a line clean across the wood, in the way I always meant to. To talk of a "wood" is to talk rot. It was the most dreadful tangle of dense trees and undergrowth imaginable, with deep yawning broken trenches criss-crossing about it; every tree broken off at top or bottom and branches cut away, so that the floor of the wood was almost an impenetrable tangle of timber, trenches, undergrowth, etc., blown to pieces by British and German heavy guns for a week.

Never was anything so perfectly dreadful to look at—at least, I couldn't dream of anything worse—particularly with its dreadful addition of corpses and wounded men—many lying there for days and days. (Our doctor found one to-day who had had no food or water for five days.) I am afraid there are more like him; but so dense is the tangle that even if one finds a man, gets some one to bandage him, and then leave him, you have lost him probably, simply because you can't find your way back to him. Talk of City of Dreadful Night; it must be incomparable to wood of dreadful night, or day.

Well, I formed a line with fragments of Northants and two companies of my own, and slowly and with great difficulty traversed the whole length of it, about one mile—must stop and try and finish later, as rations' man is going down. So sorry, but I have been on the job all day. This will be No. 3 night without sleep, and I thrive

immensely on it. So what about your eight hours as a bare necessity ?

July 16th, 1916.

I am rather hazy as to where I left off yesterday in my half-written scrawl—disjointed by constant jobs, such as reports, inspection of defences, and the like. I think I was telling you I organised a line or drive, formed up scattered bodies of Northants and a nucleus of about one and a half companies of my own, under a job lot of about five very young officers, all the rest being *hors de combat*. After infinite difficulty, I got it shaped in the right direction, and then began the advance, very, very, slowly. Men nearly all much shaken by the clamour and din of shell-fire, and nervy and jumpy about advancing in such a tangle of debris and trenches, etc. I had meant only to organise and start the line, and then get back to my loathsome ditch, back near the edge of the wood where we had entered, so as to be in communication by runners with the Brigade and world outside. It is a fundamental principle that commanders of any sort should not play about, but keep in touch with the Higher Authorities behind. But though old enough soldier to realise this, and the wrath of my seniors for disregarding it, I immediately found that without my being there the thing would collapse in a few minutes. Sounds vain, perhaps, but there is nothing of vanity about it really. So off I went with the line, leading it, *pulling* it on, keeping its direction, keeping it from its hopeless (and humanly natural) desire to get into a single file behind me, instead of a long line either side. Soon I made them advance with fixed bayonets, and ordered them, by way of encouraging themselves, to fire ahead of them into the tangle all the way. This was a good move, and gave them



confidence, and so we went on with constant halts to adjust the line. After slow progress in this way, my left came on a hornet's nest, and I halted the line and went for it with the left portion. A curtain may be drawn over this, and all that need be said was that many Germans ceased to live, and we took a machine-gun. Then on again, and then again, what I had hoped for. The Germans couldn't face a long line offering no scattered groups to be killed, and they began to bolt, first back, then, as the wood became narrow, they bolted out to the sides, and with rifle and automatic guns we slew them. Right up to the very top this went on, and I could have had a much bigger bag, except that I did not want to show my people out of the wood, or too much out, for fear of letting the German artillery know how we had progressed, and so enable them to plaster the wood *pari passu* with our advance. So far they had only laid it on thick, strong, and deadly in the belt we had left behind. However, many we let go for this reason, we slew or picked up later.

And, finally, the job was done, and I was thankful, for I thought we should never, never get through with it. Got to stop again, but will carry on to-morrow.

July 17th, 1916.

Two letters from you have been burning holes in my pocket since they came to these strange surroundings last night. I write at 8.30 a.m., so you can guess I haven't been exactly idle, or they would have been read before 8.20 a.m. I think I had to break off again yesterday afternoon, so as to let the poor post corporal go off out of shell-stricken trenches; he hated having to come to them, and no wonder, for if you don't live in the

hail, it must be unpleasant to walk into it for a period every day—and invariably be kept waiting and waiting by the C.O., who will give him his letter “in ten minutes,” which is always from one to two hours. Again, I am not sure where I left off with my letter, for now I am three days behind time with it. I think we had finished our drive through the wood, picking up a number of birds as they broke cover, but not so many as we could have, owing to my fear of going more than a few yards from the wood and being seen by the German artillery, which hitherto was ignorant of our progress, and was still laying on a terrific fire on the south edge where we had entered, and which he knew we were holding.

Having cleared the shambles of live Germans, or practically so, I had then to think of keeping what we had got with the utterly tired men. Poor things, they thought, as one always does, that having done one job, somebody else would pop up and do the next—but there was nobody else; every man in the wood was now needed to cram on to the edge facing the Germans, to hold it against them—in fact, far more than were available. Having roughly placed them in position, I then made for my starting-point, attempting to pass through the wood in doing so. And in that I learnt a lesson, which was valuable for the rest of the period we were in it. For I completely lost my way, adjutant and orderly with me. It was a black, clouded day, and smoke of shells hung over the shattered tree-tops—those that had tops! And we simply seemed to walk in circles round and round incredibly horrible debris, amongst which were sights to make one weep; men were wounded and lying there, some for days, unbandaged and with every sort of shattered limb. One could only do what one could for the moment—

bandage till they ran out, water till that ran out, and tell them we should send for them, but all the time knowing that if we were losing our way in Hell, we should never be able to lead or direct anybody else to bring them in, even if there were any available to send. Not a doctor came to the wood—thought it wasn't their job, not properly realising that ordinary battle conditions (an aid post in some sort of security some little distance behind the battle line) of fighting do not exist in wood fighting. Repeatedly I sent back messengers for doctors and stretcher-bearers, but the Germans barraged the open ground all over the route from our rear, and it is an axiom, I believe, that R.A.M.C. must not incur undue risks in getting to wounded. Regimental stretcher-bearers—only eight per battalion—carry the case out of the really dangerous zone to R.A.M.C. people, who then dress and send them back with their stretcher-bearers. In the evening as I went out of the wood, on a summons to Brigade H.Q., I met the Northants doctor coming in, but he was killed a few yards after passing. But I found our own right away back at Brigade H.Q., and told him I thought his post should be in the wood, and not outside—custom or no custom. Good little man that he is (a Canadian) he immediately went off and has been in it since, searching for wounded with his three men ; which is like searching for a needle in a haystack with three fingers. However, it was good his getting there, though the only other man who followed him was also killed. He, doctor, told me yesterday he had found a man wounded five days previously, and still alive, and thought he might live.

On return to starting point, there was much to do—reports to write, defence arrangements to be made, etc., etc., and all the time under a

crashing shell fire, so accurately laid on the trench the G.'s knew we must occupy, that it was a very bad place, and men being killed all the time ; but there was no alternative.

A stick of your chocolate saved my life at about 4 p.m., but putting what wasn't given away down for a few minutes, while I had to go away for a few minutes, some wise fellow, dodging down the trench, pinched it, and no doubt enjoyed it nearly as much as I should have. A sandbag with the grub of two or three of us was whisked off by a shell burst, so that bit of chocolate did a lot of duty for twenty-six hours, I think. Later I had, as mentioned above, to go out and see the Brigadier ensconced in a deep dug-out a mile away. It was not a healthy walk, and nearly ended the life of my orderly (but he is going to be all right) ; but, bar this incident, I don't think I ever enjoyed a walk better, for it was free air and out of Hades. An hour's conference with the General, and then back to Hades, in which I shifted my H.Q. from south to north end, nearer my own people, and the more business end for eventualities. The Northants, reduced to about 250 men and 4 officers, after their unhappy effort earlier in the day, I kept in the south, with only a very small portion of the wood to hold. Very shortly after I got back, I suppose at about 7 p.m., the Germans learnt of our presence all over the wood, and then came their artillery. And didn't it come ! And what an inferno from then to midnight, when it shut down dead, after knocking everything to pieces, and laying out a number of my people.

I think my first letter was written, or begun, during the hurricane, as I crouched in a scoop in a steep bank, every sort of rubbish and metal splinters swishing back into the scoop and rattling on my iron helmet as I bent to write. . . .

A dead German's great-coat outside, and a tin of bully beef from one of our poor dead fellows inside, made amends for an otherwise poor night, though the curtain rang down on the bombardment after midnight.

Next day, 15th, we endured intermittently violent hates from 6 a.m. onwards, with an occasional terrific onslaught, winding up with a snorter from 9 p.m. till midnight. Very busy all day.

Next day, 16th, yesterday, much the same, except that heavy rain was added to the bright surroundings, and a real winner of a bombardment from 9.15 to 12.30, which fairly made things hum, and necessitated my making the men "stand to" (absolute readiness to attack) in case it prefaced a big attack to turn us out. At 6 p.m. told we should be pulled out of the line and relieved by a bantam battalion, Cheshires, and not long after their Colonel arrived during a rain and shell storm, and I felt sorry that he should see his rather young battalion's new quarters under such conditions. His diminutive men began relieving us at 12.30 and finished at 6 a.m. only, the poor little heavily-laden things struggling for a mile through slippery trenches to reach our joyous spot, instead of moving overground once the artillery stopped. I don't think there were many of us not glad to be out, and to get a little peace here in old artillery emplacements, or in anything for a sleep.

I got in at 6 a.m., unwashed and unshaven since morning of 13th, and my exterior marvellously filthy with mud and grime. Just very soon I shall go and sleep and make up the shortage of the last four nights, during which I had somewhat less than three hours' sleep as a grand and poor total. Most of the battallion are little better off. Our losses are heavy and, as usual, the best

go. Fifteen officers are now out since July 1st, and, roughly, 450 men. The last three days and four nights cost us seven officers and some 300 men, all from shelling. Good thing our attack on Trônes Wood didn't cost us anything. . . .

July 21st, 1916.

. . . It's curious that it is only when one leaves the front line that one begins to see troops—masses of them. And here's a picture for you. A glorious summer day; a surprising amount of corn (grown behind the protection of our lines by goodness knows whom) with its concomitant of scarlet poppy and yellow mustard. Overhead a line of sausages floating in a sky, a portion of which is constantly being speckled with hundreds and hundreds of shell bursts, in amongst which you can see with naked eye, or glasses, are dragon flies (aeroplanes) soaring calmly about. After ten or fifteen minutes' Archie firing, the smoke of these shell bursts make a mackerel sky on a day like this, and is very remarkable. Below, in the sunny cornfields and jolly little valleys and folds of the ground, or in woods, are men, horses, guns, transport, and every conceivable military thing. Cavalry in deep brown squares in a fold of the ground, up to a brigade in strength. Elsewhere you will see a regiment, or a squadron, nestling in a wood. Away up on a slope, a small patch of something means a battalion of infantry bivouacking, or resting with piled arms—and there are many of such little patches. Near by there is the skirl of pipes, and down the road, going forward—not back, like wretched us—there marches a Scots regiment, while groups of others, halting on the roadside, turn out in shirt-sleeves to watch them. On the line itself Frenchmen

working on the permanent way, cracking an occasional joke with Atkins inside the train. Altogether a picture crowded with incidents—much more than I can describe. The only blot is that I am drawing it from the wrong angle.

It gave me a pretty stiff pang or two to see the cavalry—heaps of them; but unless they offered me a brigade of them, I don't think I would change back yet—not till I see what advantage of open country, etc., the Higher Commands are going to take. So far, except for a pretty dash by the 7th D.G.'s and Deccan Horse, there has been no indication of the bold and liberal use of the arm. . . .

July 23rd, 1916.

. . . I forgot to tell you of the amusing strafe I had with a railway Staff officer on our way to the Chateau place. We had made a very slow journey all day, arrived at 7.15 p.m., and were told we had ten miles to march. The R. Fusiliers were in the same train, and had twelve to go, so no one was particularly merry and bright, particularly as a branch railway line went right past our respective destinations, and we thought they might just as well have sent us on. So out we all had to get, unload the train, and clear. R. Fusiliers got under way, and I was about to follow, when some one told me the train out of which we had just got was going on empty along this branch line. So, "about turning," and in I popped the regiment again; but hardly had I done so, when the railway officer arrived, and told me to get out at once. "Why?" "Because there was no authority for troops to go in it." "All right," I said; "but I will give you authority." "No, nobody could do that except Traffic." "All right, then, ask Traffic." No, he wouldn't ask

Traffic. Then O.C. Middlesex got on the war path: the train was going to —, so was his battalion; his battalion was already in it; would any one like to turn it out? "I have gendarmes," said the porky-faced French chef de gare. "Have you?" said O.C. "Bring 'em along, and I hope there are lots; you'll want lots." But the gendarmes didn't appear.

Then O.C. sent a man posting after R. Fusiliers, to tell them the good news of the train, and they turned about and swung into the station again and climbed aboard. More work for the gendarmes, I suggested. Chef de gare railway officer now getting mad, and fleeing to the telephone, rang up Traffic. I followed. Railway officer had first wang in, and I must say made the most of his opportunity. Unwilling to hand over the instrument when he had done, but was given to understand that his head would be quite broken if he tried that game. So I got it and had my say with Traffic, who immediately said he would see what could be done; and after half an hour, said it could be done; not only that, but agreed to send along two more regiments, which I told him were following and would be in the same plight without his help. Railway officer now boiled to pulp and quite miserable, so I piled on the agony by telling him I should now do my best to down him as an officer who thwarted troops instead of helping them. I wasted no time, and have sent in a real hot report. Nevertheless, it was a good strafe, and that young man came in for heaps of home truths, and the most awful execrations—the latter from O.C. R. Fusiliers, who has a good vocabulary. So we railed instead of marching all night, and got in fresh. Just as well, as we had to march back again this morning. . . .



July 26th, 1916.

. . . Maxse and our own Brigadier were round having a look at us this morning, and compliments were flying about. Compliments are all very well, but if the Higher Command would give me 500 men and cut off the supply of nice words I would be better pleased, for then we could go on being useful.

It is a curious life. Sometimes, not often, I am glad to say, one finds oneself lying in a *bed* reading your letter, or a *Times*, and wondering why such luxury, when a day or two before one was huddled up in a scoop in the bank trying to write reports, or a letter to you, and with the candle literally blown out time after time, or knocked off its clay perch by the explosion of a shell a few feet off. Clothes mud from top to toe, and a tummy not too full of grub. Another variety to the bed position is tramping the roads, or finding one's way into some bivouac till the early hours of morning. And yet it all comes quite naturally in war, and such contrasts make the life picturesque.

A court-martial is going on below on one of my sergeants for cowardice—a horrid thing, but necessary to check anything in this shape for example's sake. "Shell shock" is a complaint which, to my mind, is too prevalent everywhere; and I have told my people that my name for it is fright, or something worse, and I am not going to have it. Of course, the average nerve system of this class is much lower than ours, and sights and sounds affect them much more. It means, nothing less nor more, really, than that they haven't got our power of self-control, that's all, and one has to try and teach them that it is necessary.

Another man, trembling all over, I threatened to take outside the trench and shoot with my own

hands, if he didn't pull himself together and take the message he had said he was unable to take. He took it all right when he saw I meant business, and I think he is cured. Many others want the same handling, and I am glad to think that perhaps they will get it besides in my own regiment, for these sort of tales get out, goodness knows how. Anyway, the General knows all about it (and I think approved of the treatment). He will pass it on as an idea worth following in other units. Doctors, I think, are also waking up to the necessity of checking shell-shock people who crowd through their hands. They were too sympathetic at first, but have learnt a lesson.

August 3rd, 1916.

I enclose a letter from Lawrie. I expect he has hit the mark, and that E.'s \* senior officers failed him and he had to lead himself. What more—what less—could he do for his country, and he was not one to fail when the need arose. But the pity of these hurried attacks, and the uselessness of them in general! They come from a variety of sources, but the principal one is the inability of junior commanders (Bd. Generals) sticking up for their principles and their troops, and claiming reasonable time for preparation.

In my report on Trônes Wood I let nobody off, and rubbed in the fact that not one officer probably of the two battalions (except myself, by an accident) had time to look at his map. Did not know even what they were going to attack, till I gave them the order at the moment of starting.

\* Colonel Eustace Maxwell, 11th Bengal Lancers, a younger brother, killed in July, 1916, while commanding a "Bantam" battalion of the Durham Light Infantry.

Eustace lost his life just where I thought it must have been, and the "sunken road" L. speaks of is where I started from for Trônes Wood. I went north and Eustace more east. . . .

August 14th, 1916.

. . . Your photos in front of me on a shelf stand under the shadow of a tobacco tin, filled with phlox, roses, and pinks, smelling deliciously. Bored with the trenches yesterday evening, I went out and wandered about some ruined houses near here, and lighted on what was once a garden, where I found the above and three or four clumps of phlox, which I picked. The latter full of scent are in a biscuit tin decorating the mess. As I returned through the trenches I let every man I met have a sniff of "home," and much they appreciated it and wondered where I had got them. . . .

August 17th, 1916.

. . . And when all is done, read your letters and do some of the infamous amount of office work which tries to dog your fighting job—if you let it. But I don't, and just let the rotten stuff stew. "Please report by 9 a.m. to-day," hasn't the smallest effect on me; and if the brigade gets the report by 9 a.m. two days hence it is lucky. There is an enormous amount of literature to be read—intelligence reports, summaries, gas reports, and so on *ad infinitum*—while all the various coves under your orders while up in the front line come in vicariously and ask for instructions, etc.

Very interesting and all that, but just a bit fatiguing, unless, of course, you are prepared to do nothing. . . .

Lost such a good boy yesterday. He had done

an excellent patrol during the night, and then got injured at 7 a.m. Very distressed at losing him ; all the more so, as it need not have been. He was hit at a dangerous place, due to it being a good place to see from, and having a sort of inclined floor. When I was there three days ago I was examining the ground from it, and as I was leaving and turning round, I got on to the slope. Not realising I was on higher ground, I turned towards the enemy's lines, and found myself looking straight into them sixty yards away. Nor was I down off that perch more than two seconds, when the sniper let go. So both then and the very day that S—— was killed, I told the captain of that section to lower the floor, so that this couldn't happen. He is a good youth, but casual ; thinks a note-book isn't worth while. And now he knows it is, as he has lost a good friend and officer.

August 19th, 1916.

. . . Had a latish night, up till about 3.15 a.m. watching my strafe, and such reply to it as the enemy gave. It all went off very well and gingered up the pigs, I hope. They replied feebly, and only knocked down one communication trench near my H.Q. (retribution for me, I suppose) pretty completely. My scheme also drew in the gunners, whom I "had" all right. What, quite naturally, they like is to go to bed snug and quietly, and only be ready to turn out if we, miles away, send up S.O.S. messages, to say we are being heavily attacked, on which they get to work as quick as maybe. The latter expression of time can be wonderfully quick, if they have had any indication or warning beforehand ; otherwise, I think, you might be dead and gone for all the assistance they could give you. They don't,

again quite naturally, see why *I* should call on them to strafe the gentleman over the way, just because *I* think it a good thing. And I haven't the right to order or ask them to do so. If, however, I am being shelled heavily by the enemy, then I may call for retaliation, which is supposed to be given. The gunners, however, had heard of my troublesome ideas on the subject, and didn't mean to play up to it if they could, or dared. When, therefore, my first little missiles hustled through the air, and shortly after what I thought was a German reply (it wasn't in actual fact till later) came back, I called up the liaison officer hard by and told him the enemy were shying things at me, and I wanted retaliation badly. The sleepy fellow played up all right, or tried to—I stood by, so he hadn't much choice—and put the message back by telephone as best he could to his major. Then apparently began a long argument, the latter evidently asking if I hadn't begun first, and so on. Just about then a real fizzer came along, burst in the alley-way outside, and I have no doubt shook the signal office far worse than it did anything outside (140 lbs. weight of high explosive does make things fairly hum inside these so-called dug-outs, with no windows in them), and conversation became more animated. "Why, they've just landed a d—d great sausage on to Battalion H.Q., Major." More chat, so I went away to watch things for a bit, then returned. "Well, when are the batteries going to fire?" I asked. "Doesn't your jolly old Major realise that we are being frightfully punished while he is jawing to you? I think it's twenty-five minutes since I suggested that an emergency had arisen." "My Major's a bit sticky, I'm afraid," was the reply. "Why?" "Don't like turning the battery out of bed, I expect, sir." "Oh, that

is the game, is it," said O.C. 12th Middlesex. "I'll take my battalion out of these sweet trenches, then, and take it back to bed in billets somewhere nice and cosy." On which I left him, to digest the horrid sarcasm as best he might.

It worked out all right, and the "Major" evidently began to think he might get into trouble if he didn't comply (as a matter of fact, I am much more likely to), and on got the guns, also a battery of bigger stuff. That was all I wanted; but they did better, and taking heart of grace, let off another lot, one and a half hours later, when my next packet flew over to the Germans and drew his angry reply.

Great fun, and I enjoyed it all thoroughly, especially as we hadn't a casualty. It was an amusing night altogether, because one sees such a variety of different personalities. For instance, my heavy mortar fellow, an Irishman, was game for anything, but all the same, terribly afraid of Bosch knocking his mortars out, and wanted artillery to work at same time. Happily, he was a Gunner, so I was able to tell him that *he* had better square his own people, because I had no right to. Eventually I did, of course, by the means I have told you. Then there was a youth in charge of another fancy mortar, which sends up about twenty-five horrid things a minute. He took his orders all right and disappeared. But knowing him before, I guessed that would not be the last of him; no more it was. "Sir," he wrote later, "I do not know if you are aware that as C.O. this section you are responsible that I am not cut off to-night." I felt inclined to write back and ask which part of him; but instead wrote across his missive, "Right-o! I'll have the parapet raised six feet at once, and have ordered a mounted escort to look after you." Poor little

chap, he came round on that and said he was afraid I thought he was in a funk of carrying out his job. I assured him I was only anxious to protect him and his precious instrument. What could I do? My people did their best not to be cut off behind their parapets; why couldn't he feel safe behind the same parapets and my men? Then I said I'd give him six men with loaded rifles! to protect him, and with this he was made happy and went off and did his work.

I must be a most beastly nuisance to people! My own General has been down for over an hour; came down full of blood and meaning to have mine, because I had changed the plan of defence, and with it insisted on the gunners, machine gunners, etc., changing all their lines of fire, etc. Turned me absolutely inside out, but being a very good-natured fellow, didn't mind my being able to give an unanswerable answer to everything, and so let me have my way with a very good grace. . . .

August 24th, 1916.

. . . We came out of the trenches last night. I began by hating it up there, but left it almost with regret, as we seemed to have got quite top-dog there, the enemy having lain absolutely doggo for the last two days, and not fired anything at us. Besides, I do think that the new idea of hitting the Germans on our own was beginning to have a good effect on ourselves. Our guns had quite come round, either willingly or because they had to, while every one began to be rather pleased with himself for being considered a tiger. The offensive spirit is sadly wanting all through; nobody wants to hurt the enemy, partly from laziness, partly from fear of retaliation; and after eight days, cursing every one and harrying

every one, I believe I was beginning to get the battalion itself into an offensive frame of mind. . . .

September 17th, 1916.

Just had church parade and Holy Communion. Such a glorious autumn day, and service was held in a stubble field with its stooks still uncarried ; view all round, rolling down land all stubble and stooks, a peaceful scene below, but a noisy one of guns in the distance, and an aeroplane chase going on directly above us, some of our " Archies " chipping in and their empty shell cases falling close by. The chase passed over us and disappeared in the distance, some adventurous and dashing Hun having taken courage to enter our country—but, as usual, so high up that I should think he might be welcome to anything he could see.

It is nice to see a really strong battalion on parade again. Northants were also there, and I passed the word round to our men to remember that we are better than anybody at anything, and that I should be disappointed if I even heard the Northants singing, especially during the National Anthem. The hint was quite enough, and they sang splendidly, and certainly I couldn't hear the battalion opposite, whether in hymns or " God Save."

Afterwards I broke them off and they came tumbling in to hear my words of wisdom, which began with appreciation of their singing efforts, and went on to news of the fighting now in progress, followed by injunctions as to our action when our time comes. Never retire unless they saw a written order from me, which I guessed, and they guessed, they would probably not get ; kill Germans and eat them, and not give them



cigarettes, as if they were their best friends. Die-hards don't get taken prisoners, except so badly wounded that they can't get away, and if this misfortune overtakes them, they give away absolutely nothing.

Germans are wonderfully cunning with their examination of prisoners: dress up as British officers and talk to them; even put English-speaking men and dressed like them among the prisoners, cross-examine them before the others, who, hearing what they believe to be British men giving away things, believe it is all right, and do the same when their turn comes.

All this, and other injunctions and advice, and then back to billets. It is extraordinary how men like being talked to. You see a common form of it at the giving away of prizes after sports, etc., when they will rush round the table to hear the prize-giver say his say.

As a matter of fact, I find the only way to make men take things in is to talk to them personally. Anything sent round to company commanders to communicate to their men either never reaches, or else falls on deaf ears. Most probably because they don't know how to get the men's interest, and make it too formal. I don't believe a man standing in his rank ever takes in anything; but let him fall out, and he becomes a human being with intelligence, instead of an automaton, which he too often takes himself to be. . . .

September 18th, 1916.

. . . We have been given, besides the nine Military Medals, one M. Cross—one officer—and one D.C.M.—sergeant—for Trônes Wood, which is a little better. I should have got another M. Cross for poor Dennis, but he died of his

wounds, and they still don't give these posthumously—only the V.C. has that privilege.

Such a miserable, rotten way of doing things—inhuman and unsympathetic, for, after all, the decoration to the boy's parents would be infinitely more to them than to the boy himself had he lived. We are a soulless crowd in some ways. . . .

September 23rd, 1916.

I write this on a doorstep, waiting for a brigade to clear out of the village to make room for us, for we marched at 9 a.m. this morning, to halt here for the night, and go into trenches to-morrow night. A lovely day, absolutely perfect autumn, and may it last for a bit, both here and with you, for though you will not suffer some of the inconveniences of rain, cold, and mud, that go with soldiering, it seems to matter just as much to me that you should have all that is good and bright. . . .

I am afraid I shall get no letter from you to-day, as a move of a few miles generally seems to be enough to deny us that enormously looked-for event in our daily life. I wonder if for those who run it, and who number themselves amongst the vast proportion of the Army out here which does *not* fight, realises this enough to make any special effort for those who do. Very good they are certainly, but they take a long time doing their job. It is curious how, if you march along the road from Boulogne to, say, the frontest line, how wonderfully few ever face the music; and how that large number which doesn't have to face it goes on not having to, and the others go on doing it over and over again. Strong, hearty young men all over the place, in safe employment, who should be displaced to relieve the older soldier out here. . . .

September 24th, 1916.

. . . Please tell Violet I thought her letter was beautiful. Some of the Rs, Ps, and Bs, were a little like Humpty Dumpty; but what of that, for H. D. is a very cheery fellow. And certainly there was one R unlike anything but an R, and I shall have to give her a prize when I have time to think of one. . . .

September 26th, 1916.

I write early to-day, as I shall be hard at it, with no further time for writing. Thiépval is the business in hand, and though it may prove a tough job, I hope we shall do it. If we do, it will be something for the regiment, as all efforts have so far failed. If we don't, we shall, pray God, have done our best. It is a fine day—a fit one for a fight—that's alliteration, dear, isn't it? I have been "rotten" for four days, but the prospect of battle seems to have cured my megrim, and I am as fit as a fiddle this morning.

You may guess how much I think of you at a time like this, and how close I feel I am to you, though distant in body. . . .

September 27th, 1916.

I have been afraid, when I had time to think of anything except the bloody business I had on hand for the last twenty-two hours, that my last letter, written an hour or two before we "went over the parapet," may have caused you anxiety before you got this one. But somehow I couldn't write to you what was a ten-to-one chance of being perhaps my last letter in the ordinary way. I was wrong, I think, and should have followed

my practice of July 1st, when I had a special one written and left for you, in case of accidents.

Anyhow, I hope this will relieve you of any anxiety, for here I am sitting in a wood (and rain) with a whole skin.

Have moved to General's quarters for orders, so carry on here.

We pushed off at 12.25 p.m. yesterday, over the most awful country that human being ever saw or dreamt of. July 1st was a playground compared to it, and the resistance small. I knew it would be, and I confess I hated the job from the first—which was only three days before we began it. So many attempts had been made, and so many failures, that one knew it could only be a tough thing to take on, and I hadn't personally any particular hopes of accomplishing it, more especially as the distance to be covered—nearly one mile—was enormous for these attacks under any circumstances, and under the special one, of country absolutely torn with shell for three months, it was, I considered, an impossibility. Added to these pleasant anticipations, I was a sick man for the three days, one of which had to be spent looking over the ground, so far as one could see it; the second we marched most of the day; the third we took over trenches from 8 a.m. till about 10 p.m; fourth day start over the parapet at an unknown hour, but happily the tonic of battle seized my rotten carcass and I slept the few hours available and woke up fit.

This is much about the task and its difficulties—not diminished (I add to its burden!) by the fact that the Prussians and Wurtembergers, who had held this line for a year, and were supposed to have been relieved, were found at the last moment to be still there! An enormous advantage to the enemy, who thus knew every

inch of the ground they had themselves prepared for our annihilation, when we should attempt to attack it.

We accomplished three-quarters of it, and were extraordinarily lucky at that, and it seems to have surprised the Higher Command, which, at least, is something. But the price has been heavy—how heavy I don't know, as regards men, yet, but as regards officers I have, of the twenty who went over, nine killed, seven wounded, and four, including myself, untouched. Two other regiments, who came most of the way with us, lost heavily in officers, and a third engaged later suffered fairly heavily. I lost all my regimental staff, viz. three officers and regimental sergt.-major killed.

It was an extraordinarily difficult battle to fight, owing to every landmark, such as a map shows, being obliterated—absolutely and totally. The ground was, of course, the limit itself, and progress over it like nothing imaginable, the enemy quite determined to keep us out, as they had so many before. And I must say that they fought most stubbornly and bravely, and probably not more than 300 to 500 put their hands up. They took it out of us badly, but we did ditto; and I have no shame in saying so, as every German should, in my opinion, be exterminated, I don't know that we took one. I have not seen a man or officer yet who did, anyway. I will not describe the details of the battle—they would be very difficult to understand. Briefly, we worked up and up our long journey, but left untaken, on our left, a very strong place filled with machine guns and a determined garrison. This was a thorn in our side, indeed, and it defied all our efforts to take it till this morning, but not till it had done us in for a large number of casualties from first to last.

All the regiment spent its night out, of course,

either in shell holes or (a very few) in dug-outs, either bombing or engaged with the enemy at close quarters. I had a safe place in a pile of ruins, which managed to ward off shells and all the other unpleasant things of modern battle. It was a busy night for me, though, and not unmixed with anxiety—in fact, very much to the contrary. Perhaps the most trying business is to keep your Generals informed of how things are going. It is extraordinarily difficult, for on a field like that of Thiépval telephone wires don't remain uncut by shells for more than five minutes. And yet they *must* know things, of course, and must get their information by lamp or runner. By lamp it is laborious, for no answer to say that the message, or each word, is received, is possible, in case enemy should see the replying lamp, and put artillery on to its position, which always happens to be in the middle of a nest of artillery observation posts (places where gunner officers sit all day with telescopes, watching the effect of their gun fire), and must therefore be kept absolutely hidden. If message is sent by runner, it means long distances on foot, over country already described, and at night as well as by day. By day the runner is usually killed or wounded; by night he gets lost!

This morning I had orders to clear out on relief by another regiment, but, much to the C.O.'s delight, I disobeyed the order and stayed on to see him through his attack on the stronghold that had beat us till then. I was in no mind to lose what we had so hardly won by going before he had done his job. And he only did it after three hours' attempt. But I have paid the penalty of a dressing-down by the General, who is furious. And more furious because I don't mind, and he knows I would do it again if even the King had given me the order.

We have two tanks with us, but they failed us, as they only could fail in such country—both arrived on the scene behind us instead of level with us. One got “ditched” hopelessly almost immediately, and left behind; the other was panting along boldly, but, trying to dodge wounded men, lost ground and fell behind, and finally got “ditched” also. I wonder if any one has learnt one lesson about them, viz. that these monsters must precede troops and not follow. Nobody seems to have thought of the wounded men difficulty; some were, I fear, rolled over. The awful callousness of one about such things! I saw in a trench several men buried, three or four sticking out but unable to move—more, of course, underneath. But humanity has no place. I had my business on hand, and couldn’t stay even one minute to give one of them a hand. If I saw evil and wicked sights in Trônes, I saw more and varied ones yesterday and to-day.

I have been writing the latter part of this in the wood again; and though shell are bursting about, in the way of German shell, so far back, on the chance of hitting something, it is peace and delight and *Nature*, after all the inhuman and monstrous surroundings of the last twenty-four hours.

In two or three hours we march a mile to some dug-outs further back, but shall be on the job again to-morrow in a minor part, I expect, in further operations to-morrow. The men are all lying about asleep, and I don’t believe most will wake for even a meal, which all must badly want, as they have had precious next to nothing since 8 a.m. yesterday, when they had to begin to get into the trenches—a tedious difficult operation at best, but infinitely so in this case. I rather think their C.O. will fall asleep in about two winks, after he has had some grub. . . .

September 28th, 1916.

. . . As usual, you come before all else, and I am sitting down to write this, when I ought to be doing every sort of thing else, and which probably will get left undone, as I am just full of sleep still, body and mind. Ought not to be, because I went to bed about ten and didn't get up till nine, and slept like I've never done before. A wretched despatch rider dug me out at 3 a.m. with a message, and I think he had a job to wake me. Matter, of course, quite unimportant !

After writing in the wood yesterday, we moved back one and a half miles to another wood, where we are now. A sadly attenuated battalion, and only four officers besides myself ; but cheery enough and full of Bosch helmets, as usual. We got in almost just in time to escape a deluge of rain, which lasted two or three hours. Quarters poor, but good enough for tired men to tumble into and go to sleep in without much waste of time. I had had them fed in the wood, so they were all right. We had to do without, as something went wrong with the mess, so a tin of salmon and a box of biscuit did for dinner, and a jolly good one too.

To our bad luck, this wood stinks of enormous guns, which fire and drop their horrid missiles into Berlin, or somewhere nearly as far back. One, a 12-inch, named "Lucky Jim," stands exactly fifty yards away, and his discharge blows out every light and fairly lifts one off one's feet. Having a bit of a headache, I couldn't face the prospect of this all night, so I went up to the village and begged a billet, which I got in the local magnate's house. A Vicomte of sorts, I think, is the owner, and still lives there with his wife, in spite of enemy shell fire occasionally crashing into it. He has some heavy artillery gunners



billeted there, and these he has put in his cellars, while he and his lady gaily live upstairs in any rooms still habitable. Pretty brave of them, isn't it? Full of hospitality, they made me welcome. Would I go to the cellars, or have a bedroom, recently vacated by a French General? I thought a bedroom and a bed just good enough, and was shown into one with a glorious bed, and I was into it in two winks, and never felt so luxurious in my life. The despatch rider was the only fly in the night ointment, but he didn't last long.

At midday Maxse\* turned up to say pretty things to us and the Royal Fusiliers, and then took three of us by car to a hill from which he watched our battle, to see the continuation of it beginning at 1 p.m. This continuation was the latter portion of the task set me—one I knew we should never do, and which never, never, ought to have been set. I don't think any one above was surprised it was not accomplished. Thiépval itself was the big nut to crack, and they were all too thankful to have done it to worry much about the high ground above it. Haig rode over and thanked Maxse yesterday for the achievement of this object.

So out we went to watch three fresh regiments take on this last 500 yards of ground, which I with one battalion was *asked* to do, after taking Thiépval with it. I had actually two other battalions to help to take Thiépval, and eventually they all three came in; but the main job was to be done with mine and Royal Fusiliers up to Thiépval, and mine from that onwards. To the three of us who were at Thiépval this action to-day was, of course, intensely interesting, for we watched it from the opposite side of the valley—a longish way off, of course, but with

\* Lt.-Gen. Sir Ivor Maxse, then commanding the 18th Div.

good glasses, and knowing the ground as we did, we could manage all right. Our own attack was more visible, of course, to Maxse, as it was more opposite the observation point. We saw the attack go over, preceded by that wonderful thing called a barrage of our guns. It must be always a striking thing to see, but to-day's was far more intense, because the operation was a limited one in breadth, so that there were nearly 600 guns at work. It is not possible to describe the sight, except that it looks like heavy monsoon clouds, filled with thousands of fire bursts, and the air is rent with the roar of the guns and the burst of shells. Behind follow the pigmy men. At first, all is fairly clear for them, except the terrible terrain itself, then the enemy wakes up and his guns chip in, and all the ground becomes swept by shells—that in front of our people, quite hidden by smoke, that being advanced over by them fairly thickly scattered with shell bursts, and all behind with the heavy line of it on the trenches they have just left—the object of the latter being to prevent others following suit. Half an hour later our troops were nearly on the ridge; then apparently a long pause, and some difficulty, and finally they got on top.

After that a long check on the left, and a re-bombardment by our guns, and later again swarms of Germans scurrying back and getting it hot from our guns as they did. Their uniforms looked absolutely black in the white chalk trenches, and so one could see them very clearly, and easily distinguish them from our men. Now at last we have the whole crest of the ridge, and the Germans will be very uncomfortable.

Next thing to go will, I imagine, be Malcolm's old friend, Beaumont Hamel, and all the high ground about it.

Now I must stop and do some work, and also write to the parents of my killed officers, though I have lots more to tell you.

September 29th, 1916.

. . . I have just finished the ninth sad letter to father, mother, or wife (happily, only one of the latter) of my killed officers—a sad duty and difficult. I am a good deal lost, for I have lost all my H.Q. people, except my adjutant, whom I did not take into action. Three young officers only came out with me, and though I still have some ten others behind in reserve, they are all, except two or three of them, quite young and quite new. And there is such a great deal to be done after an action of any severity, and goodness knows how it is going to be done. I lost just half the number of men that went over the parapet, but the fate of many of them is still obscure. Many, I hope, will be found wounded in hospital, and only the minority killed. As usual, I was killed or wounded several times, but all that happened to any part of me was the glass of my wrist watch broken by a shell splinter just before getting over the parapet! I wish that was all the damage the beastly thing did, but unfortunately it smashed a great deal more than a silly little bit of glass on my wrist.

I cannot but wonder at the behaviour of the battalion, for if there were ever an occasion when things might have gone wrong, and the attack died or fizzled out, that one occurred on the 26th. The ground was made for skulking, and every yard of it afforded opportunity for men to drop down unseen and stay there without being seen.

Yesterday, when I halted in my walk round the men's quarters here, there was one wretched-looking scarecrow standing shaking and perfectly

senseless amongst the others of his section. The kind fellows were going to send him to hospital, and all that, but I told them not to, pointing out that he had been through the mill and only wanted rest and food and quiet to be perfectly all right; whereas, if they sent him to hospital, wouldn't all the doctors say that he was a funk, which would be bad luck on him, and bad for the regiment. New idea! which was immediately seized, and one man said he would get to work and shave him and clean him up, and all the others were going to help.

As a matter of fact, it is a terrible ordeal for men who have only become soldiers in the last few months—even weeks. But in the majority of cases, nerve breakdowns are curable by brutal, rather than by sympathetic treatment. Thank goodness, some army commanders are beginning to realise this. . . .

October 5th, 1916.

. . . When we *next* get out of the line, don't be surprised if I send you home our nice little Canadian doctor to put up for ten days. He has had no leave, and can take none, as he knows nobody at home, his people being in Canada. But leave prospects are poor. One officer, N.C.O., or *man* every five days! I don't think it is because they mean to be stingy with leave, but because ships go home full up with wounded, or, at any rate, come out full up with drafts, so that accommodation is very limited. That, anyway, is said to be the reason. It is a sad pity that they can't let every man go home who has not yet been on leave since he came out. There are not, alas! a great many left who came out with the battalion; but those that there are, possibly fifty to a hundred, must want to see their homes badly, poor fellows.

I have sent one officer away, Warr, of whom I told you, for he left to join his Territorial battalion going to Gibraltar while on his honeymoon two years ago. The next turn comes round to-morrow, and I am sending an N.C.O. or man; but, as usual, I have managed to pinch a bit, and yesterday squeezed a pass out of the General for Perkes, also a Territorial, who has not been home for two years. He told me in conversation two days ago his mother had been ill, so next day when I went over to the brigade, she, poor lady, "was dying" (I didn't say "to see her son"), and I packed him off this morning, one immense grin, which will, if he doesn't control it, be sure to stick out of the train and get caught in a tunnel, or something dreadful. . . .

October 13th, 1916.

. . . I like to hear of the children learning rural and garden things. There is so much more joy in Nature if you know something about it. And it's Nature on which one falls back so often in times of stress. The mere reading of your pruning ramblers, walking through fields, and the like, obliterates some of the vile bloodiness of this War from one's mind as one reads your letters; just as getting into that wood after Thiépval did, and as that evening I found myself trudging in ankle-deep mud to get out into the fields at dusk, and the joy of it.

October 20th, 1916.

What with only a limited time in which to write, a feast of four letters to answer, and a bit of news for you, I don't know quite where to begin. But I expect you will like to hear straight off that I have got a Brigade and am off to join it to-morrow. Two pals strolled in this morning to



F. A. M. WHEN COMMANDING 12TH MIDDLESEX REGIMENT.  
SEPTEMBER, 1916.



congratulate me, and looked, and were, very nonplussed when I told them *I* knew nothing about it. However, it was all right, for Shoubridge\* an hour or two later most kindly came round to give me the news himself, and was awfully nice about it. He has just lost one C.O. as Brigadier, one was wounded at Thiépval, and another died of wounds, and now I go. I know, of course, he hates it, but hardly a word of that.

Don't I know how my beloved will like the news, and that is what makes the thing a happy one for me; without you, I should have no joy in leaving this regiment, for I have long ago come to the conclusion that I am not ambitious, and am perhaps more useful as a batallion commander than anything else. . . .

I was so glad you saw a few of my men. Do them well in little presents, for they deserve it. But you needn't believe all the stuff they tell you. It's the right thing for them to do, of course. . . .

October 21st, 1916.

. . . I left at midday, and saw all my people first to say good-bye to them. It wasn't a thing I enjoyed; but I made the best of it, and worked in my pet precepts about killing, etc., to cheer myself up. They gave me a very warm send-off, and I went off as homesick as I could be. . . .

Thus ended Maxwell's eventful time with the 12th Middlesex. On Oct. 23 he took over command of the 27th Infantry Brigade in the 9th (Scottish) Division, which at that time, and until Dec., 1916, was under the command of Major-General, now Lieut.-General, Sir W. T. Furse.

\* Major-General T. H. Shoubridge, C.M.G., D.S.O.



## CHAPTER VI

FRANCE, OCTOBER, 1916, TO SEPTEMBER, 1917

27th (Infantry) Brigade,  
9th Division,  
October 23rd, 1916.

. . . THE frost of yesterday and day before gave way to a dense fog, and south wind to-day has ended in rain, which is heartbreaking for every reason, not the least being the poor soldier-men wallowing in mud and foot-deep slime again, and undergoing pitiless shelling in their rotten, broken-down German trenches recently taken, and pounded to pieces, first by our artillery when the G's. had them, and then by the Germans now we have them. I don't suppose the German Fritz enjoys life much better than T.A. does under such conditions, but, at any rate, it is useful for his cause—if he has one. And if his artillery strafes us, as it is strafing my particular sector, with great violence, ours, I fancy, is much worse on theirs, and goes on night and day without pause. How our gunners stick it, I don't know. They live in comparative luxury, most of them, of course, but the continual firing of their noisy pieces must be hard on them. One of the Divisional Gunners told me that nearly all his men were deaf, some half blind, and all dead beat, for they had only been out of the line a fortnight since June 24th, when the Somme bombardment began, and then they were marching or training round the country. A soldier's life in this

modern type of business is a thin one, and I'm glad indeed now that I have been right through the mill with an infantry battalion and know just how bad it is. The experience should, if I can use it properly, be good for my Brigade, for it is only such personal experience that enables a commander to realise what his army suffers, what its limitations, and therefore how to help it through its business with the least discomfort possible. . . .

November 12th, 1916.

Tell Rachel that I think her photographs of me wonderfully like: my head is round, I have two eyes, a nose, a mouth, hair, ears, five fingers on each hand, and two clump feet—these are all accurately depicted in her portrait, and hardly a detail is missing. Kaiser Bill looks good, but I haven't seen him lately, so cannot say if it is really like him. I am riding to cadge lunch off Haldane to-day, on the chance of finding him in.

I find my Brigade a very untidy one at present, and had a shock yesterday at an inspection of one unit. In fact, I only got as far as seeing a few men, and then declined to go on. However, it is the case of a new broom, and I shall get things done my way in time, and don't mean to hustle them too much at first, but give them plenty of time to assimilate my views—and carry them out. I find I have to begin at my very door, with the hundred odd men forming Brigade H.Q., who, most of them, look like street waifs, so badly are they turned out. It does not appear to have been rubbed into the new army officers of this Brigade that personal smartness is the foundation of discipline and *fighting*. But they've jolly well got to learn that it is—or, at any rate, that I think so. . . .

November 18th, 1916.

I have just had a curious interview with a man. Downed by his C.O. for some trivial offence some time ago, he considered himself unjustly dealt with, and refused to carry out the punishment. Result—C. Martial. C.M. gave him three months' "field imprisonment," which means he carried on with his regiment, and has his spare hours filled in with all sorts of punishments, etc. Still feeling aggrieved, he declined to carry out the sentence—*i.e.* sat down and refused to undergo the penalties it was his lot to endure for three months. "Remanded" therefore by his C.O. for another C.M., which was what he was after, poor chap, thinking at the next one he got he would be able to say all he wanted about the unfairness of his original treatment, etc., and so get the whole thing, including the last sentence by C.M., cancelled. Fortunately, the C.O., knowing now my dislike to C.M., told me of the case; on which I asked him to see the man like a father, and put him on the right lines. He did so, but failing to persuade him, told him that I had promised to see him if he failed. So in he came and we sat down and talked things out, and in a quarter of an hour we had it all square, and with very watery eyes he promised to play up and not let me down. (I put it that way.) He is a lawyer by profession—or, I suppose, a lawyer's clerk (41 years old), and so fancied he knew all about law and all that sort of thing, besides being full of a sense of the injustice of things in general. I know jolly well I should never have boiled him for the stupid little error he originally committed; but then, of course, C.Os. differ in their opinions and methods.

However, it is satisfactory that a man who, at his age, gives up his profession, left his wife and

children to enlist a year ago, is saved from himself, instead of going to gaol for two years, which would have been his inevitable fate had he persisted. So he left me with a cigarette in his mouth, a good deal of "pani" (water) in his eyes, and every intention in his mind of not playing the ass in future. And I pray that he may find it possible to keep square.

November 20th, 1916.

Little news, but plenty of work seems the programme just at present. Had a good day out looking at training till 1.30 p.m. Then out from 2.30 to 5 p.m. trying to teach officers to *fight* with a bayonet, instead of drilling with it. We are curious people, and train experts to teach certain things. These experts come round and give battalions a two days' turn of, say, bayonet fighting, and leave them with nothing in their heads but a monotonous and unapplied *drill*. Of fighting there is no sort of idea. And so we begin at the beginning and go on beginning all the time, and never a bit of fighting is taught.

Happily, I fought a lot at school and at Sandhurst with the bayonet, so know something about actual fighting with it, though all behind the times in regard to the latest (and really good they are) arts of it. And yet I know quite well I could kill any man in the brigade quite easily, simply because I know how to fight, and they, poor things, only (and very partially) how to make pretty points and parries as a drill. I felt painfully, almost desperately, inclined to tell the extremely good sergeant-instructor, who tours round, that I could knock his head off, but resisted; so instead invited him to produce me as good a man as he could get, which he did—one who had been through a longish bayonet course.

And with him I had a set-to and killed him in two ticks! So this afternoon I had out all the officers of one battalion and set them to work at *fighting* each other, instead of making faces. Not much good, of course; but the spirit of the thing caught on, and they were battling all over the field and really shaping like real business.

When they are a bit better they will have to fight N.C.O's., until the latter can fight, and then the officers and N.C.O.'s. take on the men and teach them. Then we shall have some fun and go and spirit in the business, instead of the thing beginning and ending in the most useless and monotonous performance.

No Court Martial since I returned from leave, which looks as if *that* new idea had caught on also. One C.O. told me this morning that he had already begun to adopt my plan of talking to the battalion in person, and was full of the success of it and the men's very apparent enjoyment of it. . . .

November 24th, 1916.

I feel hipped, so start my letter early as a consolation. Last night I saw young Trail off with the Padre \* to go on leave. First thing this morning the Padre telephoned from a station twenty miles off, to say there had been a bad railway accident, in which Trail and the others in his carriage had been killed, he himself alone escaping, though much damaged. Kennedy only returned very late, and young Trail conscientiously wanted to wait until he arrived, which meant not going home till to-day; but I told him, to his great delight, that there was no necessity for him to wait—and so he lost his precious life.

I am going off now in a motor, as I suppose

\* Rev. Philip Oddie, M.C.

he will be buried to-day, and his people may like to think one went to see the last of him. It is all so pathetic and a poor way to lose one's life in war, and to lose it with all the happy contemplation of going home filling the mind. However, I suppose it was meant and must be right, though it is not possible to see the very hidden meaning of such things.

*Later.*—Nearly 7 p.m., after a long day and a sad one, and a still sadder task in front of me, to write to Trail's mother. I had a thirty-mile drive and found our (R.C.) Padre and an officer of the Royal Scots—besides many others—in hospital, all more or less damaged, but not anything serious, except three. From the Padre I heard the sad story: 4 a.m. and pitch dark; a coal train ahead on a steep incline, and the two last trucks breaking their couplings, came back at 100 miles an hour and crashed into the leave train. Two or three front carriages telescoped, and the whole train caught fire, with the usual awful concomitants. Trail and two others in the Padre's carriage killed, eleven men known to be killed, and some seventy to eighty damaged, some of them beyond a chance of living. I visited all my people in hospital—the accident most fortunately occurred within 200 yards of one—and I found them all likely to live, but a great many broken limbs and bodies. Then I saw all the remainder who were unhurt and took their names, so as to let their battalions know about them. At 3 p.m. there was a funeral for the fourteen dead—a melancholy end indeed for the fourteen happy men of a few hours earlier, and such a waste of life. A couple of pipers from the Camerons were sent down to honour Trail with their music. Three parsons officiated at the grave—C. of E., R.C., and Wesleyan—each reading

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his service in turn over the common grave, which seemed to me to be a sign of grace and broad-mindedness that would not have been possible two years ago ; and so has ended a sad day.

Your letter, dear, came to cheer me just before I started, and I felt I wanted another when I returned, but must wait for that until to-morrow.

November 28th, 1916.

I haven't been so proud and happy for many a long day, for to-day's *Times* announces the two V.C.'s. for my regiment (12th Middlesex). Isn't it splendid? The story of their deeds isn't so well told as I told it, or rather doesn't bring out their real salient points of gallantry. But that doesn't so much matter ; the chief and great point is that they have both got it. And if the 12th Middlesex haven't made a record for practically one day and night's fighting,\* I'd be glad to be told who beats it. Two V.C.'s., four Military Crosses, three D.C.M.'s., and thirty-four Military Medals (plus my old D.S.O. bar). If only my fifth M.C. had not been omitted I should have no fly in my very sweet ointment. . . .

November 30th, 1916.

This afternoon I was actually idle for one and a half hours, or rather made myself so, because I wanted to take out a wretched pointer dog belonging to the house in which my office is. Almost any house of any pretensions is owned by a farmer, or some one that farms, and in each there is one or more pointers. Presumably in peace, the Lord of the Manor, or syndicate, shoot partridges, and part of the business is for the farmer to keep a sporting dog or two to work the

\* Thiépvál.

birds. Anyway, they all have them, and dreadfully they treat them. Tied up all day, the poor things seldom nowadays get a run. This poor creature hadn't been out of a beastly cold kennel for two weeks, and so yesterday I asked the woman if I might take him out when I was going to see a battalion at work. She said I might, if I kept him on the leash so as not to lose him. So I made Kennedy lead him about all the morning, then let him loose on the way home.

He had quite got our smell by then, and never lost sight of us even when ranging a long way off. This morning I forgot him, so this afternoon fetched him and took him for one and a half hours' jaunt without the leash at all. He will miss the attention sadly, I am afraid, when we go, and there will be no one in here before we go to whom I could commend him for the same attention. . . .

December 12th, 1916.

Such a sweet thing in days. Snow, rain, snow, and now pretty bitter cold on top. I went up to the trenches and waded about, slush up to my shins in the front trench, which made me very sorry for the poor men in it. Everything so absolutely beastly—trenches already knocked about by fire, falling in continually from the weather; no drainage at the bottom, so melted snow deep in it. No dug-outs, as these have (quite right) been forbidden to be used in the front line, and only wretched shelters of corrugated iron, under which those not on the parapet sit freezing with cold. No blankets allowed—for the Division beat me about them (and I ought incidentally to have been under arrest as well for gross disobedience of orders). But I haven't done with them yet.



Anyway, I have got time by the forelock, and am fairly well on the way with comfortable and warm shelters for the men. Poor chaps, they are so cold they can't sleep at night, and as they have to slop about in the mud trying to work by day, their rest is nil. How they stick it I don't know—got to, I suppose. And it makes me most mutinous and insubordinate to have to deny blankets to them, because certain fatuous idiots going to bed in a bed, with probably half a dozen blankets on them and a snug room outside all that, ordain that Jock in the trenches will go too fast asleep if he has one blanket, so mustn't have it! It's not only beastly cruel, but most dangerous, for a man must sleep or doze some time, and if he can't get it properly, he will sleep or doze, or be perfectly inalert when on sentry-go; and then he either has a court martial for other people's wise orders, or he lets the enemy in and gets scuppered along with a number of other half-frozen creatures.

As I told you, I strafed our Divisional Commander, and sent him away to see the Corps Commander again, but both were decided against the blanket, and when he came to tell me the result yesterday morning, I could have eaten him—and he jolly well could see it too. Anyway, I told him I wasn't going to leave it at that, and that if he and the Corps General cared to give orders which, in my considered opinion, directly led to dangerous risk, I should protect myself by making the strongest protest I could on paper, and sending it to him officially, so that he could enjoy all the responsibility, which I absolutely declined to accept, of any mishap. I expect I shall get fired out of this job before long. I find that I see differently to too many people on too many things to be able to conform to the ordinary military ethics of sitting down and obeying them, as most

certainly I should if I were a proper soldier man. But then I'm not, and never shall be now, for at my age it's too late to change my skin.

So far I have always managed to disobey rotten orders, or been able to square their non-compliance; but I can't always expect such luck, especially as one gets up the ladder.

January 30th, 1917.

. . . I went out from 9.30 to 2.15, grumbling rather within myself, as I had some difficult problems to work out on fresh ground, and didn't know how to see the ground. However, the snow, which was not heavy, but kept the Huns quiet, did the trick, and I crawled and played about almost as freely as if there were no enemy (except that I shouldn't have crawled!). Saw a great deal more than I dreamed of seeing. Coming back from adventures over the top, or even, as one can with little risk, look over the top with glasses, as I always do, it comes as a shock to find sentries drearily peeping through periscopes. Seems so dull, and *is* so dull, though I suppose it just gives the view the limited requirements of a sentry demand, *i.e.* no German crossing the snowy No Man's Land. A periscope to me is perfectly useless, as its field is too small, and I have never used one yet.

February 2nd, 1917.

. . . Passing through the town with goggles on and muffled up all over in the car I saw a Middlesex badge, and noticed the wearer immediately halt, turn round, and stare hard. Coming back on my feet two hours later the fellow was lying up for me, and proved to be one of my old lot, now Shoubbridge's orderly. It really was rather heart-warming to find any one so glad to see me, and he

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went on saying how much they all wanted me back. So I know some one that "loves me." . . .

February 5th, 1917.

To-day I had a most scrumptious opportunity of slaying a Hun, but wasn't in a position to take advantage of it at first, and then had the opportunity spoilt when I had. I was reconnoitring a certain place for a raid, which meant getting into a crater. Getting in meant going over the top or rim in sight of the Bosch—if he happened to be looking over his parapet fifty to sixty yards away. He seldom is, of course, except his snipers, so there isn't much risk. I got over all right, and was followed by Kennedy and the C.O. of the regiment that will be concerned. Inside, however, I found one could look over the front lip without being seen by the enemy from many places, then spied an opening in it, and began looking through it; suddenly, as I brought my gaze round, I saw the fat head of a Bosch looking, as it seemed to me, straight into the gap, so I didn't take long to bob down, as he was less than fifty yards away, though beyond his own thick wire, of course. I thought, of course, he must have heard us getting into the crater, and spotted us, too, and was sitting up waiting to plug us as we went back. However, I had many peeps at the pig, and only saw him absolutely motionless, which seemed to indicate he hadn't seen us. But not one of us had a rifle, and the only way to get one was to go back the way we came and fetch one. That seemed out of the question, as it looked much more like being something of a business to get out at all without a shot being fired at us. So we lay there, hoping he would move away, or look in some other direction. But not he, and

after half an hour we had to chance it, crawl up the lip the way we came, and slip over the top as quickly as we could. This we did, and no shot fired. Then I went round the back lip of the crater to see what I could see, and suddenly discovered I could see the same man again; he quite unconscious of me. So I sent back for a telescopic rifle and a sniper, while I went on to do more reconnoitring elsewhere.

Unfortunately, the young company commander, whom I had sent for to come and see a Hun slain, came up while I was away, and finding out from my orderly, whom I had left in the trench down below, where I had seen the German, went up himself to the top of the lip. Of course, he didn't know where to look, and equally, of course, he made a lot of noise and must have been spotted. Anyway, when I got back to show him there was the German looking straight at me, instead of rather sideways as before, and evidently very much on the alert. Several times I had a look at him, but always he was looking my way; then I stayed looking at him, remaining quite still, hoping that he perhaps saw me really no more than when he seemed to be looking straight at me through the gap on the front lip. But he did see all right, and had a sniper pal beside him this time, who drew a bead on me and made a dashed bad shot. So sport was over for the day. But the officer with two good snipers is to be into the crater before dawn to-morrow, and they are to lie up for Fritz at my gap, and if they don't slay him they'll be mugs. Very disappointing, as we should have had him boiled to-day. . . .

February 6th, 1917.

I hope examination of your tradesmen's books will show that you are now on about the average

weight of food allowance, so that the new voluntary regulations will not mean any further curtailment in the household. I do hope England will play up—perhaps it will. In any case, these little sacrifices will do it an enormous amount of moral good—probably more than anything else the war has yet done for it. All the same, we soldier men don't like it in the concrete; in the abstract we can take it well enough for the country as a whole, but it touches us a little on the raw when we think of it applied to our own particular families. It is ridiculous, though, in my mind, to cut down food and leave liquor untouched. We still appear to be influenced too greatly by the fear of the working man. It will come, of course, but why not sooner rather than later? Why should men be allowed to indulge in the unnecessary, while women and children are invited to give up necessities?

February 13th, 1917.

To-day the sun melted things for the first time for a month, but it is freezing slightly now, so I believe it is going to be fine to-morrow. After that my personal anxieties about the weather are for the moment finished, for my raid will be over, I hope, by midday.

If it had rained to-day, or if it rains to-night, its difficulties will be great. There is great excitement in the brigade over the show, though only one battalion of it is interested, and sweepstakes are in full swing as to the number of *Bosches brought back* killed, wounded, or unharmed prisoners. I trust their existence may be justified; but goodness knows if we shall find anything when we get there, or if it will turn out of its dug-outs if we do. It's a good business, and, to my mind, much the best, as you know, to kill the German at all times and at all seasons, but Higher Authorities

like prisoners. They flatter themselves that they do so because it encourages Fritz to become a prisoner, whereas the real reason is that "prisoners" are trophies which go down amongst themselves and the public, whereas an unknown number of dead doesn't carry much interest—or credibility. So prisoners, if we can get them, its got to be, and my only consolation is that *if* we get them the more kudos there will be, and the more this will re-act on the moral of the brigade—and that counts for much.

However, it's a great deal a matter of luck ; we have done all we can down to the last detail (such enterprises are masses of detail), and if Bosch isn't there, or refuses to come out of his hole—well, it won't be our fault. In the one case, we shall come back empty handed ; in the other, a goodish number of swine will be done in. You know where we are, and will probably see whether it has been a success or failure. Of course, Bosch may be sitting up for us. I don't mind a great deal if he does, as it will give our lads practice in fighting, even if they lose men at it.

Thank you for the extracts of Private Chester's letter. His experience of brave colonels and good ones is, of course, very great, for he must have had at least *two* C.O.'s since he became a soldier. So rejoice greatly, my sweet, on his opinion of me ! I hope he may get back to the 12th.

Thank Rachel for her message, and tell her God heard and attended to her prayer all right, as He has given me a cosy bed, hot water bottle, and house. "A snug water bottle" is a bit novel, as a mercy to be prayed for !

February 15th, 1917.

Tell Violet I haven't crawled about and got my trousers muddy for nearly a week now, so I

expect her prayers must have been heard, and so I send her my best thanks for her thought of me, dear little thing. I have just had two boys of the Scottish Rifles dining with me—one a lively little Scotsman, of about twenty years, and the other more dour and a little older, both bubbling over with their experiences and stories of yesterday, and both happy in having murdered Huns. The lively youth despatched three all of a heap with his rifle first, and then with heavy bombs. So *he's* all right, and knows who's top dog when next he goes over. "I was so pleased," he said, "that after that I didn't mind a wee bit if I had deed!"...

February 17th, 1917.

. . . Been in all the blessed day, except for twenty minutes air, grinding away till I'm sick of it. And there's a heap more in front, much of it I can't see daylight through yet. But I never did like a "job of work"—though, as you know, I'm never really so happy as when I have one larger than I can cope with. Only at times I feel I want to knock off and play, or sit down and read, or get something to put one's mind into a different groove, even when sleeping. Working into the early morning doesn't make me tired enough to sleep without a thought of anything—the sign, of course, of a small mind. A big one chucks everything aside.

The chilblain pills have come, and I'll think it over in bed to-night and decide whether I shall chuck my brigade and devote my time to eating them, or leave things as they are (and chuck away the pills).

February 19th, 1917.

"Gipsy" Smith dined with me to-night, and provided us with a very interesting evening. He

seems such a well-known person that I feel ashamed of never having heard of him till yesterday. But I rather think he is known in humbler circles better than in our exalted ones. I asked him, to start with, why he was called “Gipsy”—was it because of his much travelling? No; it was because he is a gipsy pure and unadulterated—and he looks it all over, as he says himself. He told me his whole story, and much about gipsies. They have, as you know, their own language. Nobody knows its origin; nobody knows the origin of the stock, of which there are some two millions in the world, 20,000 being in Great Britain. They have no religion, but believe in God—which means nothing, he says. Yet they get married by the C. of E., buried by it, and christened by it. When his mother was dying God was revealed to her, and she made his father promise that he would give up drinking and swearing, and be a good man. Being very attached to her, he did. “Gipsy” was then six years old. By eleven years he and his brother and three sisters began to take notice of their father’s reform and wonderfully good life, though he hadn’t become a Christian yet.

None of them could read or write (no gipsy can). When sixteen he had determined to become a Christian, and General Booth took him up. That was before the Salvation Army started, and he worked with Booth’s Mission for two or three years, until it became the Salvation Army, when he was turned out for breaking their rules. But by this time they had turned him into a preacher—Evangelist, he calls it—and from that day he has done nothing else. He has no Church. Sectarianism means nothing to him, as he says he has only one mission in life, that is to help people.

And certainly he appears to have a wonderfully human way of doing it. The men here flock to



hear him, and he is full of interesting and often amusing stories of them and their sayings to him. Yesterday only, a R.C. man said to him, "You're a gentleman." On being asked why, he said, "Because you have told me (in his discourse to a crowd) something I wanted." "All right," said "Gipsy," "I'm glad of that; you seem to be on the right road, and I'll help you more." "I suppose you mean I shall have to leave the R.C. faith," replied the man. "Why so?" asked "Gipsy." "I don't want you to leave your Church." "Then you want me to give up something." "Certainly, I want you to give up your sins, your meanness, swearing, and drinking; that's all, and I'll help you to do it, no matter what Church you belong to. One Church is as good as another to me, so long as I can help." And so the questioner was helped, and one can't say that it was a bad way of doing it. However, I could go on all night about what he told us, and then not have finished. Some wealthy people financed him, he told me. His father is a Christian, his brothers and sisters too, but it took them all more time than it did him to leave the "tent"—the name the van seems to go by. In fact, after he had settled down, the old man made a cottage and put it on wheels—as he said a house was so cold. He's eighty-six, and makes his living at basket work; and "Gipsy," eyeing a cane-bottomed chair, told me he'd mend as many as I liked, if I'd give him the stuff to do it with. He has written his autobiography, and is to send me a copy. . . .

February 20th, 1917.

Had a long morning crater crawling, which is as dirty work in this weather as one could wish. Rain on top of a thaw on chalk is a great thing

in slime, and I was as white as a pierrot on return.

It's good fun, though, and I like the mild excitement of it. I sent up a youthful Staff officer yesterday to do certain things for me in the same crater. He went off in the morning, and not being back by 9 p.m., I found time to be a little anxious! Turned out he got there, to be told (of course) that you couldn't possibly get in by day, which equally, of course, he took as Gospel, and stayed up there till dark, when he got in; and then, quite naturally, couldn't do the job I wanted. So I had a long morning and afternoon at it to-day, taking my young man with me, to show him how he mustn't fail by little difficulties in his path another time. And now I know he won't, as he is a good lad. . . .

March 4th, 1917.

In between their work I make battalions play "physical games," invented by some one blessed with real common sense. Instead of the dreary physical drill, these games are games of all sorts and kinds, most of them really amusing, and it does one's heart good riding about the area to hear the roars of cheery laughter bursting out from wherever parties are at the games. In one of them to-day I made one of my Staff the victim. Two rows of men stand facing each other, with hands clasped; the victim then has to jump face downwards on to the arms at one end, when he is shied into the air and sort of jerked forward at the same time; caught a foot or so further on as he falls (flat on his tummy) he is jerked up again, and so goes on till he arrives at the other end. Some big fellows "at the other end" kept him tossing up in the air three or four times, before they let him out. All the games are something of this sort, and

all exercise men's lungs with laughing and their muscles with exertion. And I can't think of any physical exercise more practical or more sensible, and only wonder how anything so wise was ever allowed.

March 6th, 1917.

. . . This afternoon we had a most interesting fellow lecturing to us in a barn on Russia. A parson by trade, he is out here with the Y.M.C.A., and likes talking to men and giving lectures, etc. A great traveller to pretty well every country in the world, he probably knows most about the Russians, as he was Presbyterian Chaplain to the Embassy at Petersburg, and seems to have hobnobbed with the Czar, Czarina, and every big-wig in that country, and to know them all by heart.

His theme was, "Will Germany succeed in sowing mistrust between Russia and the Allies, and so get the former to make a separate Peace." He then explained how all the high places in the Government and in the country generally were held, and are still held, a great deal by men with German names and of German blood, and how it is through these that Germany hopes to work her machinations. Generals commanding in the field have amongst them Germans as above, and one recently gave away Brusiloff's strategic secrets. A member of the Government, the Czar's chief adviser, also a German with German sympathies, was discovered acting traitorously, and was given by the Czar himself the choice of being shot or taking poison (the latter being taken). Then there is the Czarina, from whom all Russia hoped so much as being, as they thought, English—for she was granddaughter of Queen Victoria. But she proved a German of the Germans, and her case was worse than all the others, for she "ate at his table and

shared his bed." This was all to show how dangerous was the German influence round the Czar; but the answer to the self-set question was the most decided negative, in spite of all these influences. A Romanoff had never been known to break his pledge; and this pledge of pursuing the war has been made three times—to the people of Russia, to the Allies and the world, and to the Germans themselves. And even supposing it were possible for the Czar to break his word, the people, he declared, would kill him rather than give up fighting the Germans—so deep is their hatred of them. This hatred of the people for the Germans appears to be based on their recognition of the fact that all tyranny of Russia is maintained and organised by these German officials. It was a most interesting lecture, most excellently delivered. He is my guest for the night, and has been in here talking for a long time after dinner, and told me all the story of that monk swine [Rasputin] who was murdered by a nephew of the Czar's. . . .

March 11th, 1917

We should have moved this morning, but no transport being available, a late telegram stopped us last night, so good luck gave us just what we wanted—a Sunday's rest for body and mind, and the first good day for months, in that it was really warm. I lay abed until 8.30, and then went out and just loafed across country, sometimes in muddy plough, sometimes in less muddy stubble, but just away from everything mundane and military, enjoying the solitude and Nature. And this afternoon I did the same, taking shelter under a hayrick during the rain. But I am sure that these excursions are too good for one, for I felt as homesick as blazes, and much too sick of war to be useful when there is a war still to be won!

Didn't I long to have you with me for a bit—no, not I! And when I began to think, unconsciously, how I would most like to be with you, I found it was lazing in a chair beside you on a ship with plenty of sun about. I'm sure I don't know why I choose that; perhaps it was because any other situation would mean that the war might still be on, and I should be only having a few too fleeting days with you. Then a horrid old sausage balloon rose about a mile away, and broke the peaceful reverie, also three or four aeroplanes broke in and disturbed the song of the first lark I had seen or heard since last summer, and which I was watching and listening to. Such a dear, cheery little beggar, like they always are, but the only one apparently which had found a mate, for the rest, I saw, were still in packs—crowds of them, I don't think I have ever seen so many together before. Partridges, too, have broken up into pairs. Hares also there were galore, and but for the ugly sausage above, and the noisy aeroplanes, the scene was peaceful and rural to perfection.

March 25th, 1917.

One of our lads did a gallant thing yesterday afternoon. He was left behind with a patrol to go out after dark to try and find another officer, who got into the German trenches yesterday morning with four men, and after killing four Germans (as a reprisal for raiding his company the night before) was dangerously or mortally wounded outside the enemy wire on his return, and had to be left (by his own order). The C.O. sent orders to the officer who was to search "to go out immediately," meaning to add "after dark," but being in a hurry, he forgot these important words. No one, of course, dreams of

going into No Man's Land by day ; but this youth never hesitated to ask if there were not some mistake, and leaving his patrol behind in our lines, just went off by himself at 3.30 p.m. He was, of course, seen almost at once, and heavy machine-gun fire was opened on him ; but this didn't stop him, and he crawled and ran all the 200 yards across the open to the wire and got into some little depression where the M.G. couldn't see him. Had a good look round for the officer he was out to find, failed to see him, so made a good examination of the wire and then came back, under fire all the way. Pretty good, wasn't it ? He was in the " reconnaissance " on the 21st, and did very well indeed then, so I have put him up for a D.S.O., and I trust he will get it. The poor man he was after was stung into rashness by his keen C.O. cursing him for letting the Bosch raid in on the early morning of the 22nd, so took out a patrol for reprisals. He got in with three men, immediately surprised and took prisoners two sentries, and gave them to two of his men to keep, while he and the other went on, saying that he had had four taken from him and he was going to take four back. He shot the next pair of sentries, and one of them screaming put the whole trench on the alert, and it was like a disturbed bee-hive in a moment. Matthews was badly wounded, but got clear till he could go no further than close outside the wire, and told the two survivors to leave him and clear and get back. It's a thousand pities he wasn't satisfied with his two prisoners, and didn't bring them back, instead of leaving himself and one of his men behind. Still, it was a gallant show. . . .

April 2nd, 1917.

It is a curious war. Five miles back we were freezing in oil-clothed windowed huts with daylight

and snow coming in. Here, in the old place, 800 yards from the nearest trench, I am back in my hotel-like apartment, less a good deal of glass, but absolute luxury after huts in *seas* of mud. And after dinner to-night a boy of nineteen, who is messing with us temporarily, and a perfect artist in the most delightful, quiet way on the piano, made me tarry for twenty minutes listening to him perform on a really tuneful piano that belongs to this house. Excepting you, I have listened to nobody whose playing pleases me more. He plays everything in the softest sweetest way, just like you sing certain things—never giving way to the rampant style of the ordinary man. He must be brimful of real music. And all the time he played, our guns close outside thundered away and drowned his sweet notes with their salvos. I suppose it only occurred to me of those listening that there was anything curious in the combination, so absolutely accustomed are we all to these incongruities. . . .

April 9th, 1917.

5.35 *a.m.*—The battle has just begun, and my lads are over the parapet. Such a magnificent and wonderful sight, the opening of this fearful barrage of ours; it is roaring overhead now like drums, and covering our men as they advance slowly behind it. It was an anxious five minutes before 5.30, for the Bosch seemed windy and inclined to throw up S.O.S. rockets—did, indeed, but his guns evidently thought there was nothing in it. To have the enemy's barrage coming down on us, with trenches packed full of men waiting to go over, is the most dreadful thing. So I kept my eye very anxiously on my watch, and was relieved indeed when, true to time, came our thunder, when I came down here to this horrid

hole to be on the telephone. And here I must wait patiently till the "first objective" is taken at 6.10, when orders have to be issued and things done. If all goes well, I hope to move forward in a couple of hours or so. At the moment I am about 800 yards behind our front line.

Fancy me being down in a dug-out, instead of enjoying life on the top with the battalion as heretofore. However, there'll be plenty of shell-dodging later, when I go forward, and that's always interesting, as it is rather like choosing your line of country hunting. I had a great sleep, in spite of the dungeon, and am as fit as can be and full of fight. And so, I think, are the men.

I shall probably keep this in my pocket to finish later; but if anybody is going back, I may give it to him to post (on the chance of his doing so). My thoughts are all of you, darling, and the babies. Bless you all, and God keep you.

7.50 *a.m.*—So far all going well. Our first objective made with light casualties, but a good C.O.\* killed, alas! We are now on our way to second objective. A lot of prisoners coming in, but not many from my lot, I am glad to say. They are killing, I think. But our job is only a very small way through yet.

9.15 *a.m.*—Our second objective taken.

April 10th, 1917.

9.45 *a.m.*—My battle letter had perforce to stop yesterday; too much business, and I moved forward at a few minutes after the 9.15 entry. Everything went well till then, when there was to be a pause for four hours, to get ready for the next attack, so far as we were concerned with the battle. I went right forward to my people, and

\* Lt.-Col. H. U. Thorne of the 12th Royal Scots.



found them in good heart ; issued orders, and started them off later for the last effort, of which I had much anxiety. But we were in luck, and the enemy made no resistance, so that we had a procession, greatly to every one's surprise and relief, for with troops that had already made two attacks, a third is a great trial of endurance. By about 1 o'clock we had got everything, and with wonderfully little loss, *considering*. I don't know what the number of prisoners amounts to, but our Division took about 2000, and this Brigade fourteen machine-guns and a gun ; so I suppose the other brigade did proportionately well in that line. What the total bag is all along the line we haven't heard, but it ought to be biggish. I can't write any more now, as these German dug-outs kill me and make my head burst, so I will finish later. In the meantime we are waiting for orders, men nearly all lying about as they did last night, in the snow, poor chaps. . . .

May 7th, 1917.

. . . Such a perfect day yesterday, at least for my job, as there was a pretty sharp north-east wind to temper the sun's warm rays. I started out at about 10 a.m. and got back at about 6.30 p.m., and liked the tomb-like darkness and atmosphere of the dug-out no better for those seven or so hours of fresh air. Wandering about in one's own lines is always interesting ; but in these sort of make-shift battle ones, of curious shape, and without much system, and with neither side settled down for long occupation, it is much more so, of course, and there is an unlimited amount of things to think out, readjust, and so on. I have a very keen eye for Bosches, and found several places where our snipers could get good targets, and I left them bang-banging away cheerily. If

one doesn't get hold of men and things pretty quick the Bosch seizes the initiative, and makes life unbearable by his sniping ; and if tired men are allowed to remain so, or rather allowed to remain idle, after being rested (so far as you can get rested in the trenches), this supremacy goes on. So I am very particular about getting every one on the job soon—clearing dead out of the trenches, putting everything in them ship-shape, rifles clean as in billets, and removing the heaps of equipment and odds and ends that encumber trenches after a battle. Sanitary arrangements go all to pieces, too, if one doesn't catch hold of discipline at once. It is sad to see so many of our dead lying out in front of us—many, many of them.

When I arrived yesterday I saw one of our stretcher-bearers outside talking to two German stretcher-bearers. Our man called another of ours, and out he went, and between them brought in three of our wounded. Germans were looking on, with their heads over the parapet, and our people the same. Only when the two lots separated, apparently, did the Germans fire—quite probably some who hadn't seen what was going on, and only saw two of our people from a distance walking about. Our people, of course, returned the compliment. This was just off my Brigade front, but on my own one of my officers shouted out to one or two of our people he saw in No Man's Land to come in. They didn't hear, or were still uncertain whether the officer was British or German (Atkins and Jock are hopeless as to direction, and never know where they are). So the officer got nearly up on the parapet to shout, and nothing happened from the German side, though they had their heads over the parapet ; then our people saw and came in. One of them said a German sniper was

within a few yards of him, but didn't shoot when he came in. I don't know whom we have in front, but evidently a new lot, who have some sense of chivalry—a very refreshing discovery. . . .

July 9th, 1917.

. . . We had a great Brigade boxing tournament to-night, and I saw some of the best fighting, if not always the best boxing, I have ever seen, though there was much of that too. It really did one's heart good, for boxing amongst soldier men is generally a poorish business; but all these lads meant fighting, and there wasn't a dull round or moment in all the three and a half hours of it.

One man, a K.O.S.B., entered for two weights, so fought some six or seven heats, and at least eighteen rounds. He had no science, but just sheer grit and ability to give and take punishment. Just as he was winning the middle weights he put his thumb out of joint, which was very hard luck, and as he was just beaten in the heavy-weights, I gave him a special fifty francs prize from myself. He deserved a thousand francs, and I'd have given double that sum not to have a quarrel with him—a pithy remark I made in the speech at the end. How men love being talked to. When the show came to an end they all began trooping off to their teas—some three hours overdue—but the moment they heard some one (me) talking on the platform, tea was forgotten and they all came tearing back. You have seen the same sort of thing at prize-givings, haven't you?

I simply love talking to men now, and watch their keen eager faces, always ready to roar at some feeble joke and acclaim anything that appeals to their imagination. There was just one pair of boxers to-night who didn't show to

advantage—they patted at each other, instead of hammering; and when I said that this Brigade, when it went fighting, whether Germans or ourselves, fought, and fought to draw blood, and always drew blood, so wasn't accustomed, or going to have that kind of stuff, there were frantic cheers. . . .

July 23rd, 1917.

Here endeth a day which began at a quarter to 10 a.m. and only ceases its activity at 9.30 p.m. ! And such a hot day, too, a perfect summer one without a breeze to temper the jolly old sun. So you can imagine what our legs are like. But it was great fun, and if you want to see real honest enjoyment at its best, and keen rivalry good-tempered and well contested, just step in, my dear little sweet, and see my Brigade of Scots on such an occasion. The excitement of which was to be the best battalion lasted almost up to the last event, and that didn't take place until about 8 p.m.

Then there was the marshalling of the prize winners, then marching past to the music of pipe bands, and then prize giving. Finally, an invitation to close in to hear a few kind words from me, resulted in the rush of 3000 to 4000 men like an eccentric avalanche, and such a rush it was that I thought they would suffocate the front few hundred, as indeed they nearly did. The giver of the few kind words, of course, had about one square foot of room to stand in, so he mounted the prize table, and so obtained a commanding position. It must be fun to be a good preacher, and what a chance such a one would have—and some, I am sure, have—with such men to talk to. *If* he is only human, doesn't talk down to them (nor yet up, for that matter), they seize a point

so quickly ; while as to humour, I don't believe any longer in our Scots national failing. Anyway, they always see *mine* ! They are bursting with health and spirits now, and you have only, metaphorically, to prick them with a pin, when a cheer bubbles out. The amount of cheering that's gone on for twelve solid hours to-day is perfectly inconceivable, and I don't believe a man in the Brigade will have a voice for days.

There were lots of beautiful tosses mule riding, but, happily, no one killed or severely injured. I won the mule Derby ! and lost the horse-jumping by a point or two, owing to a bad refusal, which necessitated my changing on to another one. . . .

July 31st, 1917.

A very long and interesting day, from about nine till six, in the new line. It is a long one with big distances, but full of interest, and all sorts of fun possible, I think. Bosch very retiring, and I found myself peacocking about outside our wire, in some places 200 to 300 yards in front, examining our trenches from the enemy point of view ! Though 300 yards distant from one part of the line, he is anything from 500 to 600 elsewhere, and behind a small crest line, the top of which, as proved to-day, he doesn't, or didn't to-day, even occupy with snipers.

Of course, it is all very well for me to do this sort of thing, as I have a particular object in doing so ; nor is it any harm for the men to see that it can be done, as they, as a whole, think that No Man's Land is a most dangerous place, whereas one has to try and persuade them to think it is not so, in order that at night they may go out in it for patrol work, and for enterprises against the enemy. As I passed down the trenches the

sentries were peeping through their silly old periscopes as usual, and no doubt they thought I was quite mad to get up on the parapet and go through the wire. I didn't mind them thinking that, for the reasons given above. But when on one occasion I had returned to the trench, and had gone some way down it, and had occasion to look back, I confess I thought they had learnt the lesson of No Man's Land being not so dreadful as they thought a little too well, for what did I see but the whole platoon swaggering about on top! Curious fellows for extremes, aren't they? However, they were soon shouted back into their more normal positions, but I doubt whether they will bother about the periscopes any more, and a good job too.

I hatched all sorts of little enterprises against the rubbish opposite, and came home fairly content, and extremely muddy, after the long day, only to find that orders had just arrived, moving me to another sector three or four miles away. However, there is nothing like change, and to-morrow I hope to go off and see the new line, which is of quite a different type and condition; and it doesn't sound so interesting as this seemed likely to be. It feels like three long days wasted (one before coming in and two since), but it isn't really, as it exercises one's brain, and mine gets extremely lazy if left inactive for even a short time. . . .

August 5th, 1917.

A poor sort of Sabbath Day, in so far as its being a day of rest. I began early by riding to my new H.Q. and taking over the sector. Then from 9.30 till 5 was out in the trenches, and trying to solve a knotty problem or two. One part of my line is separated by a dry canal, anything from seventy to a hundred feet deep; we on one side,

Fritz on the other, the distance from edge to edge being about eighty yards. The banks are so steep, and the cutting so deep, that we can't see down to the bottom, nor even half-way down, without craning over the edge, which is risky, as a sniper over the way might plug a hole in you. Happily, he didn't seem to be there to do so, as I found it necessary to do a good deal of leaning over. It's a rotten line, and doesn't lend itself to bloodshed anywhere that I can see.

My headquarters are behind, and right against an enormous slag heap dug out to make the canal. A curious sort of spot, and much too hugged up to this mountain to please me. . . .

If one doesn't take the Bosch as one finds him, life is rotten and business difficult ; he is so tame nowadays—compared to up to last June year—that one can take advantage of it and do things now that wouldn't have been dreamed of then. For myself, I simply can't see anything worth seeing with a periscope, and when the German is tame I soon find I can't see half enough looking over the parapet of a trench, and so get upon top when I find it's quite safe to do so. Often as not, too, if you do something the Bosch never thinks you will do, you can count on doing it with impunity, because he will not have any one there to make it otherwise.

These all-day jaunts are most interesting ; but they take time, and now it's nearly 1 a.m., with nothing done yet that ought to be done. I came in at about 5 p.m., and till 8.30 was interviewed by people. After dinner my own Staff have their innings, so my own work gets left.

September 2nd, 1917.

. . . This is a nice airy spot, and my brigade is all together close by, which is a great convenience.

Two battalions are in the ruins of a village, two under canvas. I have a roomy hut, which, nice now, would be a pretty cold kind of residence in the winter. In it reside a family of swallows, and three jolly little fat heads and white breasts are showing over the edge of the nest, after their owners have spent the afternoon out with father and mother, learning to catch flies. They are full of chat, telling each other all about the day's dissipation and exploits. I wonder why they are such tame birds.

Tell Rachel and Violet that their lovely packet of chocolate fed four hungry men yesterday during their long motor drive of four to five hours, so they may imagine how grateful we all were for that lovely present. Most of us had forgotten to have lunch on the train to Folkestone, or thought it too early, and the ship was no place for any eating, as it was too rough. So the chocolate did for lunch and tea, and carried us on till a late dinner.

Oh, dear, such a fuss in the nest—a fourth baby has stayed out over late, and is trying to get in, and the other three are not going to have it. But he wins, and has crammed his fat little body in. No, he has been thrown out again; a babel of voices—he is back again and evidently a champion, for he sits squarely on all the three recalcitrant heads. Now they have let him in, and four heads are now showing over the top. Mamma is perched on a rafter watching with maternal pride her offspring, and hoping, I doubt not, that they will soon go to sleep and not jabber at each other, or shout for food. . . .

September 20th, 1917.

MY DEAREST BELOVED—

I like this sort of day! A battle all morning, and a letter in the evening. I had the same at Trônes Wood and Thiépval,



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The sweat and grind and *great* anxiety of the last nearly three weeks came to a head at dawn this morning, when we went for the Bosch and took a 1000 or 1200 yards of France out of him, besides killing a goodish number—probably a very much larger number than we see, owing to our artillery work a long way behind our objective.

I think my Brigade took well over 300 prisoners too many—probably more—and did their job very completely and well.

That was their share ; mine was to make the plans, and then when they are through, to see that they are not lost by the perfectly incredible ignorance of our jolly New Army. I learnt wisdom as a battalion commander—there goes out the lamp with a shell burst—and know what to do immediately after the objective is taken, *i.e.* go up to it without loss of time. And, my goodness, it was necessary this morning, for I never saw such chaos ; no one doing anything, except enjoying the situation and being tied up into knots. No idea of what position to hold, and how to hold it ; most of them doing absolutely nothing. Yet the Bosch supposed to be going to counter-attack at any moment. Ground quite chaotic and churned into quagmire much of it, so it was not an idle four to five hours I spent, I can assure you, my Sweet.

The men (and officers) were pretty well done after an all-night march into position and the long stretch on their nerves afterwards till they go over. They face what music there is, and very nasty it is in the attack ; but afterwards, when it is over, and, like children, they think the game is finished, shells perturb them, and the new officer, as a whole, has no sort of control or hold over them ; often not of himself. But, of course, all this is not curious ; it is absolutely inevitable, for you can't learn these things in months ; they become instinct only by

years of business experience and learning. The only surprising thing is the tosh that is written about our magnificently trained Army, when one knows its training is surface deep at best, and not always that. Gallant fellows they are, and give them a straightforward task and they will do it to the best of their power. But ask them more, and they fail you, unless you have learnt by experience never to believe that anything you have taught them will, or can, stay with them in any real emergency, and so take steps to remedy the limitation.

It is unpopular with higher authority, of course, this streaking forward, because I am not in position to send them pretty messages of victory all the time. But that I don't mind one little bit, because I like to hold on to anything I have got and not lose it, as in probably seventy per cent. of cases it is, when there is no one to guide the ignorant at the crucial time, so that Bosch walks up and deprives them of their hardly earned gains. He did not, however, attempt to dispute our gains while I was down there, and glad I was, as I wanted to be through with the chaos before that.

He is said to be counter-attacking part of my line, but from my perch I can only see our artillery slating where he would have to come over, but no sign of a Bosch, and I don't believe he's there. Wish he were, now we should be ready for him. Further to right, however, he is supposed to be attacking the Australians, my neighbours, who I dare say will give him all he wants.

Now for a fairly beastly night—about seven or eight of us in a nine by six hole! and all could do with a little sleep.

Watson is up with a clean pair of boots (as I was bogged and wading much of the morning) and rations, waiting for this to go back with him, so

I'll sleep now and tell you more to-morrow, and answer your very welcome letter.

Zonnebeke Redoubt and Ypres-Roulers Railway is the address of my people to-night in case their whereabouts interest you.

Heaps of love, Dearest Beloved, to you and the Babies. I hope Nina is with you, in which case my love to her.

This was the last letter which Maxwell wrote. On the next day he was killed, when out reconnoitring in No Man's Land. The following letter from his orderly tells the sad story.

27th Brigade,  
October 5th, 1917.

DEAR MADAM—

I was very glad to hear from you. I will try and tell you about the fateful 21st, when I lost my beloved General. There was Major Ross and myself along with him. We went up to the front line to see if everything was all right, and carried on down the line of our brigade front. We went out into "No Man's Land," as the General wanted to have a good look round. We were from eighty to one hundred yards in front of our front line. A captain of the Scottish Rifles came along with us to his "out-post." The General was showing him the land. I think the General wanted to have a machine-gun posted at this particular part. I was about five yards in front watching for any movement in shell-holes. I was lying flat with my rifle ready to shoot. The first bullet that was fired by the Huns went right into the ground below my left elbow. I shouted to the General to get down, as he was standing up at the time, and he did so. He sat for about two minutes, then he got up again to show what

he was saying to this captain, and he was just opening his mouth to speak when he got shot. I caught him as he was falling, and jumped into a shell-hole with him. I held his head against my breast till all was over. Madam, I cried till my heart was liking to burst. If I could only see you I could tell you something about the General. He was a King among men and loved by every one; in fact, Madam, next to yourself, I miss him more than any one, for I would have done anything for him.

Perhaps I can speak better than any one of his personal bravery, for I was his personal orderly in all the fighting the brigade did.

I can say no more just now, but if God spares me, I will come and see you some day.

I am,

Your faithful servant,

(Signed) A. LAIRD,

L/Corporal.



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